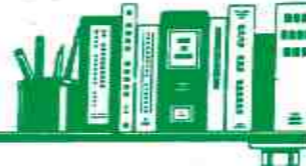
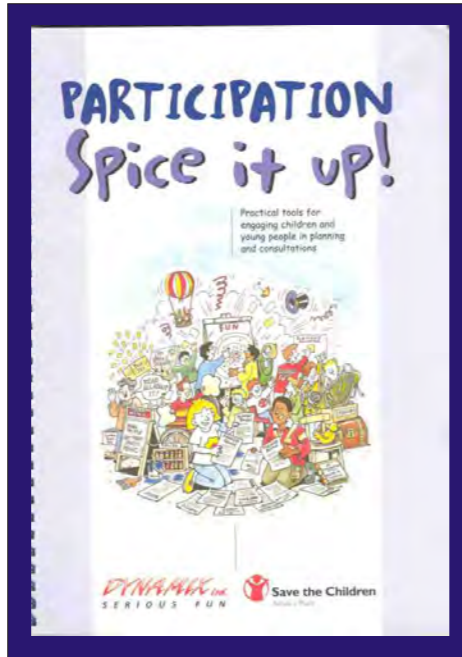


Resources



The materials listed here are resources on adolescent development. Although AHI does not distribute any of these materials, they are available for use within our reference library at the AHI Youth Centre located at 17 Lawal Street, Off Oweh Street, Fadeyi, Lagos



BOOKS

THE YOUTH POWER GUIDE, HOW TO MAKE YOUR COMMUNITY BETTER
URBAN PLACES PROJECT
(UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST)

The Youth Power Guide" is one of those rare tools that are user friendly for both youths and adults. It guides young people on how they can take up the leadership role and make a difference in their neighborhood and various communities. It states some of the achievements of young people who have taken up these roles and responsibilities and effectively empowered their peers and made a change in their communities.

PARTICIPATION: SPICE IT UP!

DYNAMIX LTD. SERIOUS FUN
Young people who wish to involve

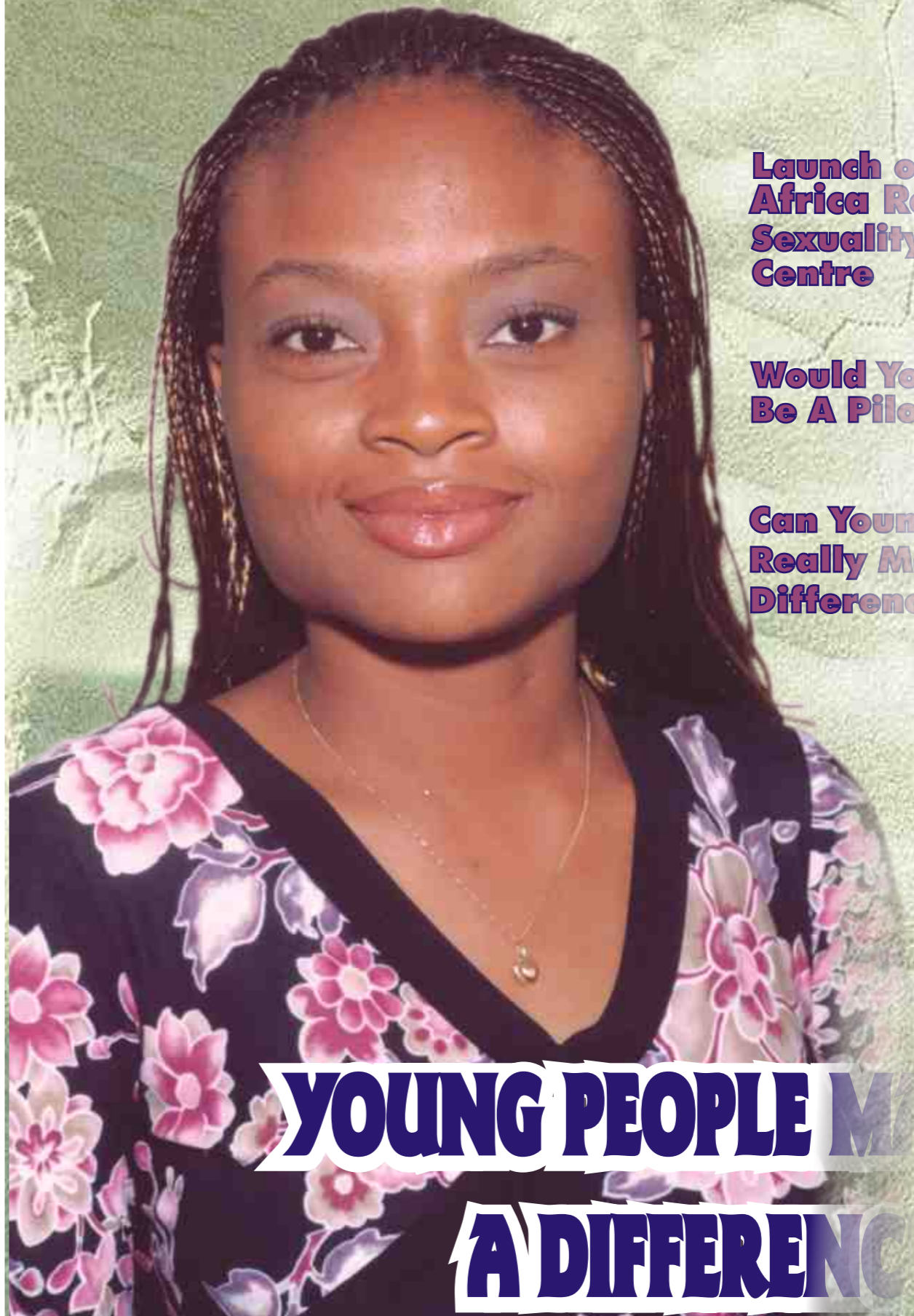
themselves in any setting in order to create or influence change and also need the power to pursue it should read this book. **Participation: Spice It Up**, teaches young people on how to go about implementing a change in creative ways; education, leisure, commercial, therapeutic and even social policy making. Methodologies to facilitate team building, whole school policymaking, consultations, fun days, curriculum development and play leaders. It is a practical tool for engaging young people in planning and consultation.



GROWING UP

A Newsletter for Young People

Action Health Incorporated
September 2003 Vol. 11 NO 3
ISSN-1118-4574



Launch of the Africa Regional Sexuality Resource Centre

Would You Be A Pilot?

Can Young People Really Make A Difference

YOUNG PEOPLE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

GROWING UP

Growing Up is published quarterly in Lagos, Nigeria by Action Health Incorporated (AHI). AHI is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation dedicated to the promotion of adolescent health and development. We serve as an advocate and a catalyst for change in the present poor status of adolescents' well-being by increasing public awareness and implementing innovative education, healthcare and youth development programmes.

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Cover Photo: Adeola Olunloyo

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This edition of Growing Up is produced with support from The MacArthur Foundation, Population Programme, Chicago, Illinois.

Printed by FINE PRINT LTD.
Tel: 4979275

YOUNG PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Tenny Tunkarimu & Nelly Onwordi

Young people can make a difference in their society provided they are given the opportunity to do so. Such opportunities could include talent hunt activities, training, participation in decision making (especially on issues affecting them), solving problems, organizing action groups, planning and implementing programmes and a host of other activities. Unfortunately the reverse is the case as adults see young people as problems, or burdens that should be guided and kept out of trouble rather than the treasures or productive resources that they actually are. Some adults also fear that young people's involvement in such activities may distract them from their studies. As a result, adults plan and implement programmes for young people without involving them in the process. The assumption is that they know the young people's challenges and problems better than the young people themselves do. If adults took the time to study and understand these young people, they will discover that some of the youth do have some talents and skills which could be developed and channeled into useful resources. Adults would do better to encourage such young people. They should also make every effort to change the wrong perceptions that they have about young people including the believe that young people lack the skills needed to handle serious issues or make significant differences through their work.

Contrary to this opinion, a lot of young people see themselves as very resourceful who should be given the opportunity to make a difference. Below are stories of some young people who were trained as peer educators and are influencing their

peers and community positively.

ADEOLA'S STORY

At age twenty-three, Adeola Olunloyo has become a youth leader and an advocate in the reproductive health field. She has represented Nigeria at various programmes in Portugal, India, U.S., Egypt and Canada. She also serves as a resource person for youth development programmes at the national level. Adeola's involvement in adolescent sexual and reproductive health promotion dates back to 1997, when she worked as a youth intern at Action Health Incorporated's youth-friendly centre immediately after her senior school certificate. A year later, she gained admission at the University of Lagos to study Mass Communication. She remained an active volunteer for AHI and represented the organisation at outreach/advocacy events to communicate the benefits of sexuality education for young people to both policy makers and the community.

Adeola also had the privilege of anchoring AHI's TV programme "Youth Forum", which is shown on Lagos Weekend Television (Channel 8) every Saturday Morning. The live phone-in programme addresses young people's growing up concerns such as unwanted pregnancy, drug



Adeola educating some young people about the challenges of growing up

abuse, HIV/AIDS and so forth, which are often considered 'taboo', and 'difficult to talk about'. This information has empowered young Nigerians to make informed choices about their sexuality. The programme gained prominence and prompted the "birth" of another programme called 'Growing Up', a 13 episode programme that addresses various issues of youth concern. Expressing her views about her activities, Adeola says, 'I feel privileged with my work because it gives me the opportunity to reach out to other youths and help them cope with real life issues. My involvement in development work has taught me patience, hard work, perseverance and selflessness, all of which are virtues that has helped me cope with the challenges of being a Nigerian Youth'.

As an undergraduate, Adeola organized health programmes for students in hostels within the University of Lagos and was an active member of the student union government. Students (especially females), had access to information on HIV/AIDS, STIs, Unsafe Abortion and Safer Sex practices. She is also one of the master trainers for the NYSC/UNICEF HIV/AIDS programme for youth corpsers in the 36 States in Nigeria. Now that she has graduated Adeola says 'the challenges are bigger but the passion is alive'. Adeola is concluding plans to start a youth-led NGO called Youth to Youth Initiative, which will involve peer educators as agents of change to implement programmes geared towards enhancing the development, leadership skills and sexuality of youths in Nigeria. "Visible achievements have been made in terms of people's willingness to discuss sexuality issues with young people and I feel fulfilled that I could contribute my own quota towards

youth development in Nigeria." Says Adeola. She intends to further her education in Communication and Development.

TUNDE'S STORY

Tunde Olumuyiwa was trained as peer educator in 1996. Then he was a student of Ajayi Crowther Memorial Grammar School. Since he was the only trained peer educator from his school, Tunde felt challenged to influence his peers positively. He says 'I longed to spread the message on sexuality issues amongst my peers, so after my training as a peer educator, I started a class-to-class discussion and also organized programmes like teens day, inter-school discussion which focused mainly on HIV/AIDS, Adolescent Reproductive Health Issues and Abstinence.

He organized a team of peer educators' who invited other young people to discuss the challenges of growing up and find solutions to the challenges. He also endeavored to be a role model to his peers through his life style.

Now a Marketing Executive/Photo Journalist at the Gallery International Magazine, Tunde has had the privilege of meeting important dignitaries on a one-on-one basis, including the President's wife, Mrs. Stella Obasanjo, Governor Bola Ahmed Tinubu, and others. Looking back, Tunde believes that his involvement in the peer education programme paid off. For instance, he had learnt about goal setting and decision-making skills and this helped him when he was under pressure to change his choice of career. Today, Tunde takes delight in motivating his peers to be the best that they can be. He says "I had a flair for photography so I thought I should learn it, though, while I was contemplating on my decision, my friends never loved the idea they felt I never knew what I was doing, but I thank God that I was able to take my decision and prove them wrong'.



Tunde Olumuyiwa

One of Tunde's recent project involves encouraging young people to be self reliant. He says "I encourage young people to build up themselves to be self-reliant and invest their income. I buy shares and I've been able to influence my other peers to invest in income generating activities. Every time my friends see me, they appreciate and thank me for the encouragement I gave them. I thank God that I am a source of motivation to so many young people and I hope to continue in this spirit" Tunde aspires to continue with his education and to own a marketing company which will provide employment opportunity for people.

His advice to young people is "to remain focused and avoid risky behaviour that can ruin their lives." 'Where I am today is by God's Grace' He adds.

EMMANUEL'S STORY

At age 15, Emmanuel Ehinmero participated in the activities of the Health and Life Planning Club of his school, Bariga Comprehensive High School. He was trained as a peer educator by Action Health Incorporated and has ever since been actively involved in promoting messages about adolescent sexual and reproductive health. While at school, Emmanuel creatively passed on messages to his peers through the visual art. In 1991 he won multiple prizes at the Poster Designs Competition organized by AHI. He also frequently addressed his peers at the school's assembly and engaged in peer counseling on adolescent reproductive health and career issues. In Emmanuel's views, being a peer educator was both



Emmanuel Ehinmero rewarding and challenging. He says "my peers looked up to me as an example and this placed a lot of responsibility on me because I had to be a role model. I got a lot of satisfaction from knowing that I was influencing my peers positively". One of the challenges he faced back then was how to gain the trust and confidence of young people around him. After he left school, Emmanuel along with other trained peer educators formed the Peer Educator's Forum (a group of trained peer educators who had graduated from school). He became the first president of the Forum and part of the group's responsibilities was to monitor the activities of the peer educators still in school as well as the Health and Life Planning Club programmes. Emmanuel also worked at AHI as a Video Project Assistant before gaining admission into Yaba College of Technology where he studied General Arts. While at AHI, he was exposed to video film production and editing through training programmes conducted by the Communication for Change Incorporated., New York. He directed and produced films on issues relating to adolescent sexual and reproductive health, some of which were used during outreach activities. Emmanuel also strongly believed in academic excellence. He distinguished himself among his peers. This earned him several awards including the Best Overall Student in his Department and the award for The Most Promising Student in General Arts at the Yaba College of Technology in 1997. After his graduation, he was posted to Abia

State where he also got the State Merit Award for his outstanding performance during the National Youth Service Corps. He also participated in some local and national exhibitions with prominent artists. Looking back, Emmanuel says, "through AHI, I have learnt how to be a good leader, which to me means ability and willingness to serve".

SEUN'S STORY

Seun Ogunkoya was trained as a peer educator in September 1996. He never thought his approach to life would change but after the training, on becoming a peer educator, he was able to set his values and goals, which up till today serve as his guide. As the only peer educator trained from his school at that time, (C.M.S Grammar School), Seun had to mobilize his peers to strengthen the Health & Life Planning Club of his school. This was successfully implemented and the school's HLPC became an avenue for disseminating information on adolescent sexuality. Seun's ability to positively impact on young people in his school made him popular among his peers. When he left school, he worked as a Youth Assistant at AHI and later as a volunteer. Seun recalls a particular experience he had as a youth volunteer with AHI "I had the greatest honour and opportunity when I was invited by AHI to attend the organisation's Strategic Planning Workshop in 2000. I felt honoured to be among adults that developed a programme plan for improving service delivery to young people in years to come and this gave me a feeling of accomplishment and an opportunity to contribute my own ideas".

Now a law student at the University of Lagos, Seun's training as a peer educator has helped him to work at his goals. He has not failed to carry on with his peer education programme as he explains, "my friends like coming to me when they need advice on sensitive issues on various aspects of their lives and this makes me fulfilled knowing that I can sit down with my peers to fashion out

solutions to their problems. It also makes me happy and helps me to constantly evaluate my values and focus on my goals".

Seun has also made paper presentations and speeches at various programmes including the Capacity Building Workshop at Warri in 2002, the Youth Media Workshop at Yaba College of Technology in 2003, the CRC Statistics Workshop in Abuja in 2002, the Pilot Listening Exercise by World Bank and DFID in Lokoja, 2003 and many others within the Lagos metropolis. Attending these programmes gave him an opportunity of further present the case of young people to stakeholders. Seun is also an active member of the University of Lagos students' Union. He has over the last four years either chaired or been a member of some parliamentary committees such as the Employment, Food and Buttery, Budget Review, Judicial and presently the Transport committee. Seun's next goal is to become a graduate and be able to apply his legal training in any capacity he finds himself not just as a professional but also as an advocate for his peers.

TIPS FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Form A Positive Group: Form a group and plan programmes to reach out to more young people. You can start yourself and then invite your friends to join you and to invite other young people. Solicit for support from well to do adults in your community and have them in your advisory council to guide and make the project a reality. Sketch out your project goals and make flyers stating its objective(s). Organise a question and answer session, where more young people would be mobilised and spoken to. You can also create awareness through long walks to various parts of your community. Talk to people about the project. Set aside your meeting days and community development project days (i.e. cleaning of the gutters, street sanitation, etc). With this, you are sure to make a difference in your



Seun Ogunkoya(left) making a presentation at a Workshop in Abuja in August 2002

environment.

Join a Community Development Association (YCDA) In Your Area:

You can make a difference by joining and attending CDA meetings where ideas on how the community can progress and improve its present status are discussed. Since young people are known to know the happenings and have very creative ideas, you should feel free to express your ideas and be creative. This way the adults will be encouraged to ask you for input whenever one is needed. Never get discouraged or feel left out even when you find you cannot make financial contributions; your other inputs would have gone a long way to improve the community. Don't hesitate to assist in whatever area or way that you can. Show Positive Attitudes to Your Peers: You can do this by sharing positive ideas, carrying out research on youth development and sharing the outcome with your friends. Be a role model; obey your teachers, parents and other adults. Do not fight, avoid using abusive language and always have a smile on your face. That smile alone can draw young people close to you and make them feel free to share their challenges with you. Also, know the kind of friends you keep; make sure you have a good influence over them and vice versa.

Collaborate With Other Youth Groups:

Make friends with other youth groups and plan programmes together. This way it strengthens the limit of your group and expands the project because more people are involved. However there may be challenges. As the group grows, so

does the project and the more the funds needed. Solicit for support from NGOs who are in your field (to provide IEC materials, etc), Pastors, Imams and CDA chairmen. Discuss with them, the particular area you want to handle (e.g. health talk, importance of education, reducing crime rate among young people and recreation for leisure). Also tell them your target audience. As you plan, think of ideas that can attract and retain young people's attention. In planning your programmes, write to newspapers the local radio and T.V and give a brief description of your project and the event you are planning. Call them up to encourage them to attend the programme. Give prizes to young people who have participated positively and have made a difference. The prize giving could take place in the school, mosque, or in your community.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Think about something positive that you can do to affect your community and neighbourhood. For example, you can ask a friend who is living outside your vicinity what the latest project is in his area so that you can develop something similar in your community. You can also get involved in decision making in your school e.g. you might run for a position in the Students' Union Council. Give speech on topics you care about on children's rights, domestic violence, etiquette, and health. Don't wait to be given a

useful role, get other kids involved in your efforts and offer them meaningful things to do by identifying things around your environment that needs to be attended to. The development of a skill can help you to teach others, take advantage of opportunities to lead, serve within your youth group, and brainstorm useful roles for children/teens in your neighborhood. Grab hold of any opportunity that comes your way. A growing body of research indicates that "young people are more likely to avoid problems, behaviours, make healthy choices, learn effectively and become lifelong engaged citizens if only they have opportunities to contribute to the development of their environment and make a difference". These days, many young people are given opportunities but they misuse it, which gives the adult the opportunity to say that young people can not be involved in handling things.

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Take advantage of opportunities to lead or serve within your youth group and make sure that you make a positive impact on your peers and on the community at large.

Poems

THANK YOU MUM

For a caring heart
 For loving me
 For believing in me
 For understanding me
 For everything you've done for me
 I just want to say 'Thank You Mum'
 And I love you.

- **Evelyn Bryce**
Lagos

TEENAGE PREGNANCY

Teenagers! The word reminds adults of the "good old days"

Days when one felt the urge to become independent
 Days when one felt he/she could take charge of him/herself
 They hear details and fables about sex
 They are warned not to believe what they see or hear
 But they ignore their parents' counsel, believing that they don't understand

To satisfy their curiosity they experiment with sex
 Then comes pregnancy, borne as a result of ignorance and sometimes disobedience

The future that once looked bright becomes bleak
 The girl an object of ridicule in the society
 The boy brings shame and dishonor to his parents
 He engages in menial jobs just to make ends meet
 The girl drops out of school and is faced with many problems

Her bones are not yet fully developed to deliver a baby
 Therefore she may lose her life during the process
 What a tragedy! My teenage friends,
 Teen - age is not the time to forsake advice
 Teen-age is a time to choose the right path of life
 Please, learn to listen to the views of others
 Learn to let elders share their experiences with you in order to avert danger

Such as an unwanted pregnancy!

- **Lilian Enodien**
Lagos

ALCOHOL: THE SILENT DESTROYER

Please welcome me into your house I'm the silent destroyer;
 "S.D" for short I'm capable of all the havoc you can think of
 Small harm, big damage, I can manage very well
 I can eat into your brain and make you mad or
 Into your nerves and make you shake and crawl
 If I get into you while driving, I can make you crash
 Murder is no problem for me if I get into you
 With me in you, diseases are usually highly welcomed
 If I can't immolate you, I can make you age, talk silly things
 Forget things and miss your way
 I can make you suspicious of your wife and friends
 I can make you hear voices and go real crazy
 I can make you sell your pride, conscience and business
 Which brings a total ruin to your life without your knowledge
 But with your permission
 What else can I not do after I have made you a pauper
 The work is so easy for me because I will come in sparkles
 And foams from bottles and cans, into you
 Your family, your town, your city and your country
 And one by one I will sweep you all out of life
 Just to honor my name "Alcohol, the Silent Destroyer"

- **Fatimah Adebayo**
OAU, Ile-Ife, Osun State

YOUR FUTURE, YOUR CHOICE

We read in the paper, we hear on the air
 Of strangers knocking at our doors
 He has no keys but walks to the adamant
 He has no eyes but sees the unyielding
 He has no gun but sends the adamant to heaven
 Still some feel reluctant to keep off
 Some do it for fun, some to calm pressure
 Some do it for money, some to show boldness
 But remember it's your life at stake!
 Abstain from the dreadful stranger who gives no good future
 Value yourself, be assertive, and realise your goals
 Pray and work very hard for a successful future
 Because whatever your future brings is your choice.

- **Abimbola Tunde M.**
Noforija, Epe

PHOTO REPORT

INTRODUCING THE AFRICA REGIONAL SEXUALITY RESOURCE CENTRE

The Africa Regional Sexuality Resource Centre (ARSRC) was officially launched on Wednesday 11th June 2003. The ARSRC is a component of the Ford Foundation's worldwide initiative - "Global Dialogue on Sexual Health and Well-Being" which seeks to promote more informed public dialogue on human sexuality and contribute to positive changes in relevant policies and programmes around the world. ARSRC is one of the four regional sexuality resource centres being established around the world; the others are located in Latin America, Asia and North America. The ARSRC is hosted and facilitated by Action Health Incorporated, a pioneering, non-profit, non-governmental organization dedicated to improving the well-being of Nigerian adolescents. The ARSRC will work in four focal countries including Egypt, Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria. The website (www.arsrc.org) is currently under construction. Following are some photographs from the launch of the ARSRC.



Dr. Nahid Toubia President, Research Action And Information Network for The Bodily Integrity of Women(RAINBOW) key note speaker at the launch



L-R: Mrs. Prof. Bolanle Awe; Chief Mrs. Oluremi Tinubu and Dr. Babatunde Ahonsi, during the launch



Cross section of guests at the launch



Cross section of Advisory Council members from South Africa, Kenya, Egypt and Nigeria

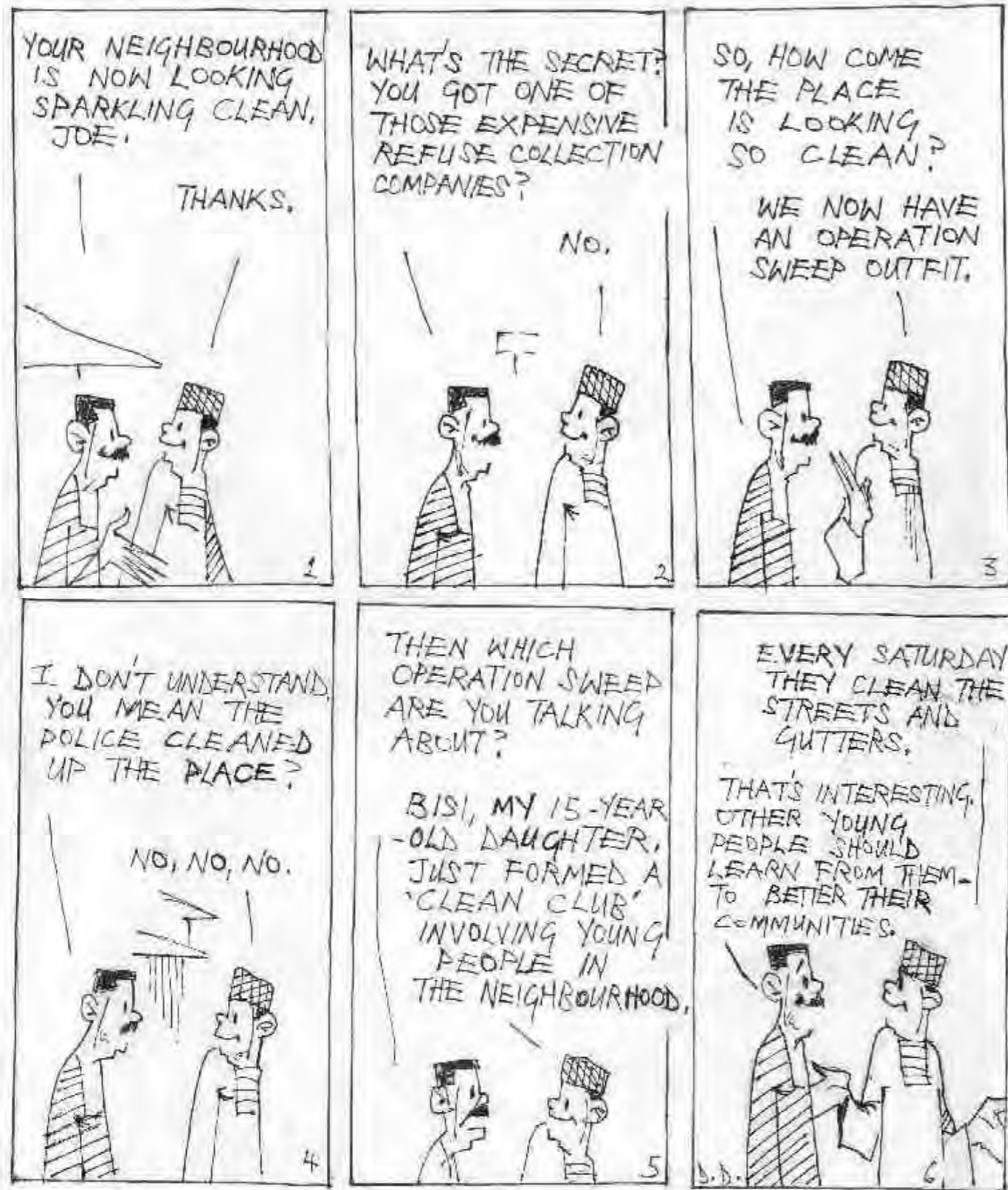


Cross section of representatives of important Stakeholders Institutions from across Nigeria at the launch



L-R: Mrs. Nike Esiet, Prof. Bolanle Awe; Chief Mrs. Oluremi Tinubu (cutting the tape); Dr. Uwem Esiet and Dr. Babatunde Ahonsi, as the ARSRC was declared open

Cartoon

Dear Diary

MONDAY

I went to Joke's house to see how she was fairing and was glad to see that she was no longer depressed by the incident (she had been raped by a gang of boys on her way from lesson and had discussed with her school counselor who took her to see a doctor). She had a smile on her face when she saw me. We discussed some issues at length especially relationships and the commitments involved. I found that we had similar views about the issues discussed and that gave me a nice feeling as I thought I was the only one in my school who didn't have a boyfriend.. Now that I know that Joke shares the same values as I do I feel a sense of relief and joy within me. I am further convinced that my studies are more important and should occupy my thoughts right now, rather than boys.

TUESDAY

My biology teacher has decided to divide the class into groups of five so that we can have practical group work. I am happy that I get along well with all my group members; Sade my classmate was not so fortunate. She was grouped with two other girls and two boys. Unfortunately, she had had a fight with one of the girls when they were in the junior class and have not spoken to each other ever since. As if that was not bad enough, one of the boys in her group was her former boyfriend! All her attempts to have her group changed were ignored by the teacher who felt that the reasons she gave were not good enough. I feel sorry for her because she will be stuck with them for five weeks! Gosh!

WEDNESDAY

It is now certain that our social night at school will take place in two weeks time! The final year students have been planning it for a long time and they have tried to keep it a secret as much as possible. What surprises me is that, it is

held every year at the school hostel without the school authorities being aware of it. I just hope they don't find out this time around because I have waited long enough (six years), for this day to come. It's like a dream come true.

THURSDAY

We had our first group work in biology class today. We were asked to collect ten different species of leaves and write as much as we could find out about them. When I got my group mates yesterday I was pleased, but today I am not! I was grouped among the laziest bunch of people I have ever met! Only Emeka and myself appear to be serious among the lots. We both did all the work on our own yet at the end of the day we had to include everybody's name on the project. I was very angry at their attitude but there was nothing I could do since the teacher had given us a joint project.

FRIDAY

Last night, my friends and I hatched a plan to go shopping for some clothes and makeup after school was over for the social night. At first I absolutely objected to the idea of sneaking out to the night market because of Joke's experience, but after giving it a lot of thought, I decided to go along with the plan. After all, I'd never get to attend my school's social night ever again. This was a one in a million opportunity; I think I have to make the best of it. After school hours, I looked for my friends and we set out for the market. We went to the back of the hostel where we scaled the wall. It was the most terrible experience I have ever had. I fell flat on my face at the other side of the wall and bruised my knee, the others seemed fine and they did not help matters as they made fun of me. They laughed so loud that they attracted the attention of

the school security guard. I was really scared when he flashed the light from his torch in our direction.

SATURDAY

Yesterday was one of the most eventful days of my life? I don't think I will ever forget it in a hurry. The security guard threatened to report us to the school authorities so after a lot of pleading, he agreed to let us go after we gave him some money which we quickly contributed. He also expressed interest in going out with me. I was about to give him a good telling off when Rachael kicked my bum and told him I was interested in him too. She looked at me sternly and I nodded giving him the fakest smile I could manage. He tried to touch my cheek but I dodged him and urged the girls to hurry, as it was getting dark. We made it to the night market and we got loads of beautiful stuff. In addition I decided to get myself a new pair of slippers, as things turned out a lot cheaper than I expected. Well, we did not have to scale the wall this time around, the security guard let us in through the gates. He winked and smiled at me all the way and I was absolutely disgusted. I just hope I can shake him off as soon as possible.

SUNDAY

Help! This security guard would not leave me alone. I was chatting with some of my friends when a junior girl came to tell me someone was waiting for me outside the hostel. It was a good thing I peeped outside the gate first, because there he was standing by the tree grinning and licking his lips. I ran like I had never run before into my dormitory and locked the door behind me. Few minutes later, my friends came round and started making fun of me. It was obvious they had figured out what was happening, but I definitely did not find it funny. Can someone tell me how to bail myself out of this?

TEENAGERS COMMEMORATE DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD



The month of June is a remarkable period for young people in Africa. This is because it commemorates an event that has turned their situation around. It all started in 1976 in Soweto, South Africa, when thousands of black school children took to the streets in a protest march against the inferior quality of education they were receiving and to demand for their rights to be taught in their own language. Unfortunately, hundreds of young boys and girls were shot and killed and in the two weeks of protests that followed more than a hundred people were killed with more than a thousand injured. To honour the memory of those killed and the courage of those who marched, the Day of the African Child was inaugurated on 16th June 1991. The initiative was pioneered by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and awareness is created about the plight of the African child every time the celebrations come up. Action Health Incorporated (AHI) joined the rest of the world to commemorate this event with activities conducted at the AHI

Youth Centre and three selected secondary schools on Friday 20th June 2003. The schools included Immaculate Heart Junior Secondary School, Maryland; Gbagada Junior Girl's Secondary School, Bariga; and Gbagada Comprehensive Junior High School, Gbagada. AHI was represented at the schools' activities. The event provided an opportunity to promote the need for sexuality education for young people. The sub-theme chosen was "Sexuality Education, Equipping the Youths for Life". Activities carried out at the different schools included drama presentations by the young people on abstinence and peer-pressure, cultural displays and choreography. A discussion on the need for sexuality education for adolescents was held as well as a question and answer session in

with discussing issues on their reproductive health with their parents, only a few of them reported having a close relationship with one of their parents in whom they could confide. Others, particularly the girls reported being warned by their parents not to "move near boys", as they could become pregnant. They also said that their peers appeared to be well informed about reproductive health issues, judging from the confidence with which they responded whenever such issues arose in the course of interaction. "They always seem to have all the answers" was the comment made by a young person when asked why young people often took to the advice and information obtained from their peers; they did not want to be labeled as "egbe" (novice) or look foolish among their peers. In the course of the discussion the young people learnt the need for factual information. They were told to always question the source of their information as well as to resist peer pressure if they did not want to make costly mistakes that would jeopardize their future. The goals of Action Health Incorporated were stated while the benefits of joining the Health and Life Planning Clubs were stressed. Thereafter, they were invited to visit the youth centre after school hours for counseling and reproductive health services which are available at the centre. During the Anonymous Question segment, some of the questions asked were as follows. When does menstruation start? Is it necessary for boys to experience "wet-dreams" as a sign that they have

which the young people enthusiastically asked questions bordering on their reproductive health and relationship with the opposite sex. In their response, most of the young people said that they were not comfortable

attained maturity? Can a hermaphrodite impregnate himself? How does sperm make girls fat? Can one contract HIV through kissing? Why do girls grow faster than boys do? Who is supposed to be the agent for sexuality education, the parents or the teachers? Why are parents shy about discussing issues on sexuality with their children?

A total of 1,124 young people were reached through the commemoration of the Day of the African Child.

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING

June 26th every year is observed as the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. It is an expression of the determination of the United Nations' General Assembly to strengthen action and cooperation at all levels. The goal is to have an international society free of drug abuse. The General assembly ratified the decision on December 7, 1987 (with resolution 42/112) following a recommendation of the 1987 International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. The conference had on June 26, that year adopted the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline of Future Activities in Drug Abuse Control. On February 23, 1990, the Assembly adopted a Global Programme of Action to combat illegal drugs, stating that the International Day was to be observed as part of the effort to raise public awareness about fighting drug abuse and to promote preventive measures. Action Health Incorporated (AHI) marked the event as part of its activities in promoting adolescent sexual and reproductive health. The programme was held on Friday, 27th June 2003 at the Youth Centre with the theme "Let's talk about drugs". Activities held included a talk on drug abuse and sexual health which emphasised the need for young people to abstain from the use of drugs because it made them engage in risky behaviours such as experimentation with sex, as well as

making them indulge in unprotected sex. Under the influence of drugs, they become unable to practice and negotiate safer sex resulting in STIs/HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancy. They are also prone to want to share unsterilised skin piercing objects like needles and blades, which also leads to HIV infection.

Another discussion with the young people titled "The adolescent and drug use highlighted a generally held wrong notion referred to as the "recreational use" of drugs. This was identified as one of the seemingly innocent but false statements circulated about drug use. Such statements give young people the erroneous belief that they could only become addicted if they used some drugs for a very long time. Nicotine, the substance in Tobacco, which is highly addictive, was used as an example to explain to them that even casual use of drugs could induce a physical dependence. With such dependence comes an increased need for the drug, which will subsequently damage the ability of the users to act as free and conscious beings capable of taking responsible actions to fulfill their needs. A Video film on "Drugs and the youth" was shown during which the young people had the opportunity to listen to the experiences of drug users as shared by youths from European countries. It featured the different kinds of drugs and their effects on the social and psychological development of young people. The film was later reviewed by the participants during which they compared drug use amongst adolescents in developed countries and those in the developing countries. The majority was of the opinion that the close family ties which obtains in the different cultures and traditions of the people in African countries contributed to the lower incidence of drug use amongst adolescents there as compared with what obtains in European countries. The infiltration



Drama presentation by students of National College Gbagada during the commemoration of the International Day Against Drug and Illicit Trafficking

of western culture was noted as being responsible for the increasing use of drugs amongst youths in Nigeria. Others were of the opinion that young people in the developing African countries faced greater economic and social hardship coupled with the lack of information on sexuality and taboo surrounding such issues; hence they were more prone to drug use. Other issues addressed at the event included; drug trends, signs of drug abuse, resisting peer-pressure to use drugs (role-plays), false statements about drug use and so on. From the questions and comments made by the young people in the course of the programme, it was clear that there was a general awareness of drug abuse amongst youths but they expressed surprise when they learnt that substances such as paracetamol, kolanut and coffee could also be abused. There was also an argument in the course of the discussion as to whether consumption of alcohol and cigarette smoking were really forms of drug abuse. Students of National College, Gbagada presented a short drama, entitled "Beware", which portrayed how young people easily engage in violent activities as well as unprotected sex while under the influence of drugs. The anonymous question and answer segment followed and it featured interesting questions such as; Is it true that some medicines contain a bit of cocaine? I enjoy taking Vitamin C all the time, is it drug abuse? How can I convince my boyfriend to stop taking drugs? Is it



Students participating in the question and answer session during the day of the African child commemoration



Cross section of students at the Corona Secondary School's Teens' Day

true that doctors prescribe cocaine for health problems? Can kolanut and coffee be grouped among drugs? Is it true that some fruit beverages contain alcohol, how can I identify them? If my daddy sends me to purchase a bottle of beer for him should I go, since I know that the habit is dangerous to health? The role of the parents and sometimes the extended family in promoting or curbing the use of drugs amongst youth was discussed at length. The young people were of the view that those whose parents consumed alcohol and who often had to purchase these products for them faced a greater challenge in resisting the pressure to engage in drug abuse. They sought advice in this regard and were given tips on assertiveness and communication skills. They were also encouraged to visit the counsellor at the health services unit when they faced challenges and needed to talk to someone. The young people were thus advised to be open and honest with their parents. They were also warned about the dangers of being used by adults to engage in drug trafficking with the promise of huge financial remuneration. They were told of the possibility of being caught by law enforcement agents like the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and of being sent to jail. In view of this, they were reminded of the shame and disgrace that would be brought upon their families. It is obvious that the participants benefited immensely from the programme. They said that they appreciated the new information they acquired on gateway drugs (tobacco, alcohol and marijuana), how to communicate with drug users and the different stages of

drug abuse. They valued also the information on the fact that kolanuts, coffee and common drugs like paracetamol and panadol could be abused. A total of 240 youth were reached at the event.

CORONA SECONDARY SCHOOL AGBARA CELEBRATES TEEN'S DAY.

Corona Secondary School Agbara organized her annual Teen's Day with the theme "Anti-Social Behaviors Amongst Adolescents". The programme was held at the school hall, which was filled with students of the school as well as those invited from other schools. The programme took off at 10:40am with an opening prayer by Mr. Olamide Akintewe, which was followed by recitation of both the national and the school anthem. Miss. Damilola Talabi took the opening speech by welcoming all the teenagers present. She said that the programme was not just out to entertain but also to educate, she beseeched all to ensure that they learnt something new that would become a tool in their hands in the future. The drama troupe of the school presented a drama titled "Anti-Social Behavior Amongst Adolescents". Action Health Incorporated (AHI), was represented by Miss Osunkayode, Programme Officer Information Education and Communication (IEC) Unit, who gave a lecture on the theme "Anti-Social Behaviors". She described anti-social behaviours as any act or behaviour that is likely to cause harassment or distress to

others stating that it is most common amongst young people. She said such behaviour usually emerge in social relationships. Miss Osunkayode stated that adolescents are at a stage of development, where they are preoccupied with forming social and personal identity as well as establishing a sense of independence. Some anti-social behaviours she mentioned include bullying of schoolmates, verbal abuse and sexual violence. She advised the young people to stop any form of anti-social behavior saying "it leads to negligence from family and peers, poor performance in school, exposure to high risk behavior and its consequences". Shortly after the talk from AHI's representative, there was a character reading by two students of the school, which was also in line with the theme. In the reading, the young people displayed various anti-social behaviors of young people. Some of the students, who had been trained on 'Sexuality Education & Adolescent Reproductive Health Issues' and had proved themselves to be responsible, were made peer counselors. The drama troupe of AHI was also present to entertain the teens with a presentation titled "Premarital Sex". The AHI troupe also presented a song titled "No Respector" and a poem recital titled "The Red Wild Rose". It was a fulfilling time for the young persons as they left the venue happy and satisfied that they had learnt something new.



AHI drama troupe presenting a drama on *Saying No to Early Sex* during Corona Secondary School's Teens' Day

Action Health INCORPORATED

Presents

10

Teenage Festival of Life 2003

THEME:
YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIP:
EMPOWERING TODAY'S YOUTH FOR FUTURE CHALLENGES

VENUE:
UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS MAIN AUDITORIUM
AKOKA, LAGOS.

DATE
14TH NOVEMBER, 2003.

Prizes
Computer Set + Accessories,
CD player, Public Address System,
Television Set and lots of
other attractive prizes.

CATEGORIES
• Songs • Poems • Drama

RULES

- Each school can only submit a maximum of 2 entries
- All entries must be certified by the school Principal.
- The songs, poem and drama entries must be original and reflect the theme of the event.
- All participating schools must attend a one-day training workshop on Monday 10TH JULY, 2003.
- The competition is open to all secondary schools in Shomolu, Kosofe and Mainland Local Education Districts.
- Submission of entries closes on 30TH JULY, 2003.
- Winners in each category will be selected by a panel of judges.

For further details contact: TFL 2003 Planning Committee, AHI Youth Centre, 17, Lawal Street, Off Oshodi Street, Fideyi, Lagos. Tel: 01-7743745 E-mail: info@actionhealthinc.org

RIGHTS OF A CHILD

Protection for Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances

BASIC PRINCIPLE

Children in especially difficult circumstances deserve special care to reduce the life threatening stress in their lives. Such children may have been separated from their parents due to poverty or may have become refugees due to civil strife or war.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Children who have been rendered homeless and parentless because of war or impoverished living conditions are referred to as children who are in especially difficult circumstances. It is difficult to imagine what it must be like to be forced out of your own home, to leave everything you own behind, and run away. But think about these terrible truths:

- ü Over 12 million children have been left homeless due to war during the decade of the 1990s.
- ü Another one million children have been separated from their parents because of poverty or war.
- ü About 30 million children live on the streets of the world. Children who live in unsanitary conditions are subject to various infections, which undermine their health, growth and their capacity to learn.

FACT BOX

The Bad News

- In Mozambique, between 1981 and 1988, there was an average 454,000 childhood deaths because of war.
- It was estimated that about 200 million children would be living on the streets by the year 2000 (worldwide).
- In Africa, civil strife and war are creating refugee populations in over ten countries.

The Good News

- 1000 organisations in 60 countries signed an international treaty to ban landmines.
- In 1999, Operation Sting raided hundred homes of suspected child abusers in 12 countries in Europe and confiscated 100,000 pornographic pictures of children.
- The International Labour Organisation is urging governments to pass laws to prohibit companies from hiring children below 15years.

CHILDREN WITHOUT CHILHOODS

The number of child soldiers is increasing throughout the world. Children may be kidnapped or bought in slave markets and then taught to hold guns and shoot. Many times they are forced to take drugs to make them easier to control and more obedient. Millions of young girls, some even as young as 10 years, are sold into prostitution by their families. For some girls, it is either they submit to all kinds of brutality or die. Recently, (January 200, as reported in the Sunday Vanguard) a bus carrying 40 school children from Akwa Ibom was stopped by the police. The driver fled. It was discovered that the children were being transported across the boarder to be sold as cheap labour.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

1. Two million children have met violent deaths in the last decade. Another four million have ended up married, or have sustained a permanent injury (blinded or brain damaged from land mines). Countless millions have lost their homes from civil strife. What can be done to ease this terrible toll on the world's youngest citizens? As many as 300,000 children, some as young as eight years, in dozens of countries are directly involved in conflicts as soldiers, porters and forced labourers.

ACTIVITY

Have a 'Poster for Peace Competition' in your school. Invite the media to come and view the winners and put the winning poster in the newspaper.

MESSAGE TO THE GOVERNMENT

1. Establish services to resettle orphaned/parentless children, or those who have been separated from their parents.
2. Provide shelters and educational opportunities for street children and try to re-integrate them into their families.
3. Legislate against the recruitment of children under the age of 18 into the military Re-unite children who are refugees with their families.

DISCUSSION

What are some of the reasons why children leave their homes and move into the streets?



What social services does government provide for homeless children?

MESSAGE TO PARENTS

Work for the protection of child rights.

Provide a basic living for your family, so that no one has to move out of the household to survive. Ensure that both boys and girls are educated to know their rights.

DISCUSSION

Do you know any children in especially difficult circumstances?

Is anyone doing anything to help them?

MESSAGE TO THE CHILDREN

The following passages are excerpts from magazines and newspapers:

Guatemala City Six teenage boys were kidnapped by a group of heavily armed police in the 90s. A month after the kidnapping, the bodies of two of them were dumped back on the street where they had been kidnapped. They had been blinded, with ears cut off, tongues cut out and shot in the head. This is the sort of punishment the national police gives to anyone who 'informs' on them. The remaining four boys have never been seen.

San Salvador Victor Raul Carranza, 18 years old, stepped on a landmine on 18th April 1991, and had the lower half of his right leg blown off. He is one of thousands of children killed or permanently injured by landmines every year.

Liberia Children as young as seven years were found in combat. Children were often brutalised and forced to commit atrocities against their own families.

Pakistan Child brick carriers have been deformed from carrying loads too heavy for their backs; child pencil makers often contract deadly lung diseases from the slate dust in the work place. Nigeria Fifteen years of military rule has left the educational sector in shambles. Many household heads are unemployed; this has increased the number of young people on the streets hawking, begging and stealing. What does the future hold for a child with no education, and even with education no job opportunities?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Did you ever consider that the inexpensive 'Made in China' pencil you may be writing with might have been produced through the exploited labour of children?
2. There are approximately 25 countries in the world currently at war, make a list of them and try to find out where each country is on the map. If possible, try to find out the reason for the conflict.
3. Why are children likely to be the greatest victims during a period of war?
4. What does it mean to be a refugee? Find out about the refugee camps in Nigeria. Where are they located?
5. Give two reasons why factories hire children?

REFERENCE:

These materials are being serialized from "Nigeria and the Convention on the Rights of the Child: A Workbook for Nigerian Junior Secondary School Students" UNICEF Country Office.2000



TRUE LIFE STORY

COST OF IGNORANCE

I don't feel comfortable sharing this experience but I just have to, so that other young people won't become victims of similar circumstances. I have always wanted to be different from others; while my friends did silly things and got involved in unbecoming behaviour in the town where our school was located, I kept to myself and this distinguished me from others. My decision to keep my virginity had always been a topic for discussion for my friends. They wondered why I made so much fuss about retaining my virginity. I held on to my values even though they said I was being foolish and immature. I had people who wanted to have a relationship with me in school but I refused because of the commitment involved in keeping a relationship, which I was not ready for. I knew the implications of getting involved in one; it will kill my dreams of being a virgin till my wedding day. Though there was a lot of peer pressure, I was still able to keep to my word. One of the boys in my school who wanted a relationship with me seemed to get my point and appreciated it. Due to his understanding, I respected him and we became friends. We did almost everything together; our relationship was like that of a brother and sister. Despite the closeness I was still

I never knew that my cousin could rape me but now I know that anybody including one's relatives can rape someone. Never feel too comfortable with just anybody.

conscious of the fact that he was a boy. I was also aware that despite the fact that he shared the same views with me, the tendency of wanting to have a sexual relationship with me might be there, meaning that there was a limit to the relationship. It had to remain the platonic one that it was. (i.e. a relationship that does not involve sex). My friends saw that the relationship was getting too close and they made us the topic of discussion; "is this not the girl who said she wanted to keep her virginity, does she think she can do this with a boy as her intimate friend?" I began to wonder if keeping a friend of the opposite sex was a sign of irresponsibility. I sought the opinion of my teacher who counselled me and told me the times when I should not be alone with him. With this information and knowledge, I knew how to handle the relationship. When I got home at the end of the school session I shared my experiences at school with my mum and other members of my immediate family who were all happy to have me back home again. It was during this happy re-union that I was told that my cousins wanted me to spend the holidays with them, since we hadn't seen one another for a long time. After dinner, I told my parents that I would

spend my holiday with my cousins and we continued our conversation well into the night. What a happy family! I got to my cousin's house on Friday, they were all delighted to see me and I was more delighted to see them, I was quickly given food to eat and a film was slot in for me, I mean, I really felt at home. The days went by and I was happy all through until this fateful day. It was a Wednesday, after the daily house chores, my uncle and aunt left for work, leaving myself and my cousins alone in the house. Since we were on holiday, we played in the garden, cracked jokes and told stories. I soon got tired and I found an excuse to go in and sleep. My cousins weren't in any way tired they even said they wanted to visit their friend down the street. I was left with Wilfred who was playing basketball all alone, 'only God knows how he enjoys being alone', I said to myself. I was half asleep in the sitting room when Wilfred came in and locked the door,

I didn't think much of it since it was the usual thing to do; I just continued my sleep. While I was sleeping I felt something strange and opened my eyes to find Wilfred naked, I was astonished and asked him why he was naked in front of me. I didn't wait for his reply. I stood up immediately from the couch and made to go out but the key to the door was not there. I asked him to open it but instead of obliging, he forced me back onto the couch and we struggled but he was too powerful for me. I tried to talk to him while he was still struggling to undress me, but I couldn't find the right words to say. I thought of what to do to save myself but things were happening very fast. I begged Wilfred, my eyes were filled with tears but he was too blind with passion to see my tears. As he had his way, I cried and screamed in pain because there was nothing I could do. After the incident, I saw myself as a common street girl, a prostitute who was available for everyone, a girl of no worth whose pride had been taken away from her. Can I ever be consoled? Can I ever regain my lost pride after such disgrace? To whom can I tell this, who is there to hear me out, who is there to rethread my shattered life? God! Someone whom I know to be my cousin has shattered my dreams. He has left me in pains and now I can't seem to pick up the pieces of my life together again. I hope someone out there is reading this story. I never knew that my cousin could rape me, but now I know that anybody including one's relatives can rape someone. Never feel too comfortable with just anybody.

Dear Aunty

Dear Readers, the "Dear Aunty" column treats questions young people ask about their reproductive and sexual health concerns. You too can write in and let us know what your concerns are. You are assured of confidentiality, as your real names will not be published. Send your questions to The Editor, "Growing Up Newsletter" (Dear Aunty Column), Action Health Incorporated, 17 Lawal Street, Off Oweh Street, Fadeyi. P.O. Box 803, Sabo, Yaba, Lagos.



I would like to know why the male testicles move?

The testicles are not attached to the wall of the scrotum but they are suspended into the scrotum by ligaments. Testicles are male sex organs where a special cell that made up the testicles called interstitial cells produces sperm.



How can a person who is HIV Positive know if he/she contracted the infection from sexual intercourse or through other means like the use of contaminated sharp objects?

If someone tests positive to HIV, he or she may have contracted it through one of the following: unprotected sexual intercourse, transfusion of unscreened blood from an infected person, mother to child transmission or sharing of infected sharp objects. If such a person has been abstaining from sex or engages in protected sexual intercourse then he or she may have contracted the virus through other means. It is important to go for voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) before and after an HIV test.



What can I do if I find a lump in my breast?

A lump is an abnormal growth in the breast. It is important for anyone that notices a lump in the breast to see a doctor as quickly as possible in order to have it removed before it gets too late. Lumps in the breast do reoccur if not properly treated, therefore one should go to a government hospital or registered private hospital for proper test and treatment.



Can Radiotherapy reduce the risk of breast cancer?

Radiotherapy is one of the ways by which cancer of any part of the body can be managed rather than prevented. The part on which there is cancerous growth is exposed to radioactive rays to destroy the cells that grow excessively. The risk of developing a cancer can be reduced through early detection and treatment.



Why is pelvic examination important?

Pelvic examination is very important for boys and girls so as to detect on time signs of testicular cancer in males, cervical cancer in female and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) in both the male and the female. Such early detection allows for prompt and adequate treatment.



**REFERENCE:
Textbook for Midwives: Margaret F. Myles, Published in 1985, Tenth Edition**

VOX POP

CAN YOUNG PEOPLE REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?



The society does not give youths a chance simply because they feel they are too young to be given responsibilities, but I think it shouldn't be so.

Young people should prove this thinking wrong and show their capabilities by empowering themselves through skills acquisition. This way they can be able to contribute their own little quota to the development of their environment without waiting for the government. They can also make a difference in their families, among their peers, at school and even at churches and mosques. It is time young people took up the challenge and strove to become young adults for a better tomorrow.

- Eunice Aghete (16)

Positive contributions from young people can be achieved through clubs in schools, which are coordinated by young people themselves. Young people could also come together and set up a council where their voices can be heard. Due to our young minds and our way of learning fast I think we can make a difference even in government. I think the youth should be given a chance. This can start from the local government level.

- Tunde David Leke (18)



Yes, we can really make a difference if given a chance; this can be achieved in various ways such as writing articles for newspapers and magazines on issues that affect us. Apart from this, we can also enlighten other young people about HIV/AIDS, STIs, and other social vices. Young people could also

make a difference by asking to be allowed to be part of the mobilisation of other young people to get them involved in community projects like cleaning of gutters and their surroundings, and filling up of potholes on the roads and streets. On my part I try to make sure that everyone around me has factual information on his/her adolescent reproductive health and rights by educating them.

- Olushola Okunbanjo (18)

Your being intelligent and knowledgeable could make you a good counsellor to your peers and even to your parents. As a young person, you can also make a difference through positive influence on your other peers by giving talks on the assembly ground, or in your community and by being a role model to others. You may even form a Forum/Network of young people coming together to campaign against some indiscriminate act placed upon young people.

- Confidence Ogbeide (16)

Young people can actually make a difference within their reach even with the barest financial resources. Money should not stop us from making a difference. I think visiting someone that lacks love and affection (old people, sick people, motherless babies, orphanages etc.) and helping out with some of their household chores such as washing their dishes and clothes is one major way of making a difference. Sensitizing and giving hope to the hopeless e.g. People Living With AIDS (PLWAs). We can look into vital areas and start up the change in order to make others follow our steps. A young person could be a volunteer to his/her community with the aim of improving its status.

- Ajaira Odu (21)



Interview conducted by TENNY TUNKARIMU

Youth Skills Development Programme

The Youth Skills Development Programme was initiated by **ACTION HEALTH INCORPORATED** to afford young school leavers awaiting admission into institutions of higher learning, the opportunity to work within the organization and acquire skills in the following areas:

- Micro-computer Operations
- Office Administration
- Public Speaking
- Community Development Activities
- Personal Health Management
- Self-Organisation & Time Management



Participants on the programme will have an opportunity to work for one year by the end of which, they will be more equipped to plan and take charge of their lives. Certificates will also be issued to successful participants at the end of the programme.

Requirements:

- Applicants should be between 16-19 years
- Should have passed their SSCE with a minimum of five (5) credits including Mathematics and English Language.
- Must demonstrate creativity and ability to use their initiative.
- Must be committed to working full-time from November 2003-November 2004.
- Membership of the Health and Life Planning Club while in Secondary school will be an advantage.

To apply, write "Youth Assistant" on the top left corner of the envelope and attach photocopies of your credentials, a letter of reference from your school principal and submit your application on or before 6th October, 2003

SEND YOUR APPLICATION TO:

The Executive Director
Action Health Incorporated
17 Lawal Street
Off Oweh Street
Fadeyi, Lagos.
P.O.Box 803, Yaba
Lagos

...Don not miss this one in a million opportunity!





CAREER GUIDE

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE A PILOT?

Civil aviation is a large industry concerned mainly with the transportation of passengers, cargo, and mail on commercial airlines. Most fixed-wing pilots work for commercial airlines on short and long haul flights. Helicopter pilots may assist with fire fighting, air-ambulance work, or offshore oil and gas exploration. Other areas of work include crop spraying, testing aircraft, and aerial photography. Air cabin crew (also called stewards, stewardesses, or flight attendants) is responsible for passenger comfort and safety on commercial aircraft. They serve meals and drinks, look after ill or nervous passengers and unaccompanied children, and check that seat belts are worn on take-off and landing and when the captain decides that they must be worn during flight. They are trained in first aid and to deal with emergencies.

THE JOB

Pilots are responsible for the safety of their aircraft, passengers, crew, and cargo. On small aircraft, one pilot may be responsible for all operations but most large craft fly with two pilots and duties are split between them. Generally, the more experienced pilot, or captain, is in command and supervises all crewmembers. The co-pilot communicates with air traffic control, monitors instruments, and assist with flying the aircraft. On older, larger aircraft, a third pilot, or flight engineer, monitors and operates many of the instruments and systems, makes minor repairs and watches for other aircraft. Before departure, pilots carefully plan their flights, taking into account anticipated weather conditions, wind speed, temperature, weight, fuel requirements, and any restrictions or regulations concerning noise, use of runways, and over-flying certain countries. Before taking off, pilots thoroughly check their instruments and control systems to make sure that they are functioning correctly. They then contact air-traffic control for flight clearance before taxing the plane along the runway.

Take-off and landing are the most difficult and dangerous parts of a flight and pilots must work closely together to co-ordinate operations and make manual adjustments. Once in the air, and at their

assigned altitude, pilots navigate and fly their planned route, keeping in contact with air-traffic control stations along their route. Unless the weather is bad, the flight may be relatively easy and the aircraft can be controlled electronically using the auto-alert at all times and continuously monitoring the instrument panel for any problems that may arise. When visibility is poor, the pilots must rely completely on their instruments to fly safely over mountains, and they may have to land blind. As the aircraft approaches its destination, the pilots are given landing instructions by air-traffic control. Once on the ground, pilots must complete records of their flight for both their airline company and the aviation authorities. Flying does not require much physical effort, but there is considerable mental stress involved, particularly during take-off and landing. Pilots fly irregular hours, day and night, on a rota basis. There are strict rules on the number of hours that a pilot can work in any given period. Worldwide travel may be necessary with stopovers away from home. Pilots may need to live within a specific traveling distance of the airport. The job carries an element of risk.

TRAINING

All pilots must be licensed by the appropriate national aviation organisation, such as civil aviation organisation authority or a federal aviation administration, before they can do any type of commercial flying. There are no internationally agreed licences, but national licences tend to be broadly similar and lay down common minimum standards. Anybody who is physically fit and over a certain age can train for a private pilots' licence, but attaining this does not qualify the holder for any type of commercial flying. Commercial pilots must obtain at least a basic commercial pilots' licence. Airline pilots usually have to obtain an airline transport pilots' licence as well. Entry requirements to commercial pilot training courses vary but there is usually a minimum academic standard. For sponsored training or work with an airline, there are higher academic entry requirements, and in some countries most airline pilots are graduates.

Any degree discipline is acceptable but physics,

meteorology, astronomy, astro computing are likely to give useful background knowledge. Test pilots are often required to have an engineering degree. Training can be long, demanding, and expensive. A minority of airlines will sponsor students through pilot training, but competition for places is exceptionally fierce. Most pilots have to pay for themselves or train through the military. Prospective commercial pilots usually train through a full-time course at a training school that is approved by the national aviation authority. Courses for basic commercial pilots' licence usually lasts one year. Some prospective commercial pilots may be able to accumulate the necessary flying experience, typically 700 flying hours, while flying on a private pilots' licence, and complete a course of ground training. The basic commercial licence may have limited privileges regarding flying for an airline or air taxi operator. Commercial pilots usually have to be at least 18 years old with a minimum number of hours flying time, typically 250 hours. Candidates must pass a stringent medical examination and written tests covering safe flight operations, aviation regulations, navigation principles, radio operations, and meteorology. There will also be a practical test demonstrating flying skill and technical competence. Before receiving a licence, pilots must also receive an instrument rating for the type of plane they are qualified to fly - single-engine or multi-engine - or for a specific type of plane. To fly in bad weather, pilots must also be rated to fly by instruments alone. Most helicopter pilots train with the military. Training requirements for a licence are usually similar to those for fixed-wing aircraft. Helicopter pilots train with the military. Training requirements for a licence are usually similar to those for fixed-wing aircraft.

Once pilots have obtained their first licence they will need further training course for their air transportation licence, if they decide to join an airline company. Applicants for this licence must usually be at least 23 years old and have a minimum of 1,5000 hours of flight time, including night flying and instrument time. Pilots never stop training, since they have to retrain to fly each new type of aircraft. Pilots' licences are only valid as long as they can regularly prove that they are competent and fit to fly. Specialist pilots must take relevant training courses, such as in the aerial application of dusts and fluids. Business pilots should consider obtaining an airframe and PowerPoint rating.

SKILLS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES:

Alertness Attention to detail Calmness Communication skills Decision-making ability and emotional stability Good judgment Manual dexterity Numeracy Patience Quick reaction Self-confidence Teamwork Technical ability.

NOTE:

Good hearing, eyesight, and color vision are vital. Coordination must be excellent, good physical health is important and blood pressure must be normal. Some airlines have a height restriction for pilots (normally between 1.57 and 1.93 metres). There may be nationality requirements for working with national airlines and pilots should be able to obtain a worldwide, unrestricted passport.

PROSPECTS/OUTLOOK

Employment prospects for qualified airline pilots looked very good until the late 1990s, with a predicted increase in air travel, together with large numbers of pilots reaching mandatory retirement age. The opportunities for flight engineers are diminishing rapidly with the development of computerized flight engineering systems. Most modern cases, senior pilots prefer short-haul flights, which allow them to return home to their families, rather than long-haul ones with stopovers in other countries. Pilots tend to stay with one major airline rather than move to another and lose their position in the seniority list. With firms other than the airlines, a co-pilot may advance to pilot and then to chief pilot in charge of aircraft scheduling, maintenance, and flight procedures. The number of



Skills and Personal Qualities

- Attention to detail
- Business Sense
- Communication Skills
- Computer Skills
- Creativity
- Critical Thinking
- Decision Making Ability
- Good with People
- Leadership Qualities
- Mathematical Ability
- Numeracy
- Organizational Skills
- Persuasiveness
- Planning and problem-solving Ability
- Spatial Awareness
- Teamwork
- Technical/Scientific Ability

women pilots is slowly increasing, and some airlines are making a positive effort to sponsor more women through pilot training. Airlines now have only two pilots on the flight deck of long-haul aircraft and no flight engineer. Competition for sponsored training with the airlines is likely to remain as fierce as ever. Graduates who have experience flying jet aircraft, and who have the appropriate commercial pilots' licence, are expected to have the best opportunities for jobs with the major airlines. Most civilian pilots work for the airlines. Others work as flight instructors at local airports, or are employed by large businesses operating their own aircraft. Other business organisations, such as air taxi and airfreight services, crop sprayers pipeline inspectors, advertising and sightseeing firms, also employ some pilots. A small percentage of pilots test new aircraft. Large airlines usually have a formal promotions structure based on length of service and seniority. In some countries, pilots may have to spend from two to seven years as flight engineers before becoming a co-pilot. They may then have to spend another five to fifteen

years as co-pilots before becoming a captain. Promotion is then usually to captain of a larger aircraft. Senior captains may combine their flying duties with management functions, such as recruitment and training of other pilots, or ground operations. The major airline raised the maximum age for employment, in some cases to more than 50 years. Seniority may also determine the choice of routes.. Pilots tend to stay with one major airline rather than move to another and lose their position in the seniority list. With firms other than the airlines, a co-pilot may advance to pilot and then to chief pilot in charge of aircraft scheduling, maintenance, and flight procedures. The number of women pilots is slowly increasing, and some airlines are making a positive effort to sponsor more women through pilot training.

QUALIFICATIONS

Useful subjects include Mathematics, Physics, and Geography. English is the international air communication language, so a good command of spoken English is important for pilots whose native tongue is another language

PROFILE OF A ROLE MODEL

Mr. Olufemi Olojede is a Managing Partner with Clafem Consult an architectural outfit situated at Western Avenue, Ojuelegba, Lagos. He had his primary education at the Apostolic Primary School, Odo -



Okun, Modakeke in the 1960s before going on to St. Charles Grammar School Osogbo, for his secondary school education. He gained admission into the Polytechnic Ibadan where he had his A/Levels in Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics before proceeding to the University of Lagos (UNILAG) Akoka for a B.ES (Bachelor of Environmental Science) and M.ED (Masters of Environmental Design). He says his father is his role model and the qualities he saw in the old man are "his diligence, honesty and the fear of God". The challenges he faced when growing up were the positive competition among his brothers and sisters to excel academically despite the polygamous set up in which they were brought up. According to Mr. Olojede, he was able to achieve his dream through "zealous studying and being determined to succeed". His motto in life is "put God

first in all your endeavours".

The academic requirements for a person who wishes to study Architecture is a combination of science and art subjects which include Mathematics, English, Physics, Additional/Further Mathematics, and Technical Drawing. Such a student needs to be very good in technical drawing and also in fine arts, which stands as an added advantage. The qualities required when studying Architecture are patience, hard work and the readiness to take up challenges.

Mr. Olojede's advise to young people who are willing to venture into Architecture is that they should be interested in the course and should not be money conscious. They should be academically sound and be willing to go through the rigours of training. "Though it's a rigorous course, it is also interesting" he adds. The professional bodies young people aspiring to take the job and become professionals can contact are: The Nigerian Institute of Architecture (NIA) located at Idowu Taylor Victoria Island, Lagos. There is also the Architecture Registration Council of Nigeria (ARCON), which is situated at Federal Secretariat Victoria Island, Lagos. Undergraduates as well as graduates can become members of the NIA. Examinations are also taken at different levels of entrance. The final exams known as the Professional

Practice Examination qualifies one to become a registered member of the NIA and after some years of practice, the architect could be elected a fellow of the institute.

Arch. Olojede is a registered member of ARCON and NIA. He says, "The advantage of being a registered member of ARCON is that a number and stamp will be given to you and you are recognised throughout the country. He further advised young people aspiring to read the course to look ahead at a very bright future based on their capabilities since the society needs more architectural technicians to assist in designing standard buildings.

His dream for all Nigerians is that both the rich and the poor should be able to build affordable houses. To achieve this, he believes that the government needs to provide building materials at substantially low rates (i.e. local bricks and tiles for roofing etc.). "This way", he says, "more people will be able to afford to own houses". He is happily married and has three children.

Our Apology

We apologize to our readers and especially Mr. Olufemi Olojede for the errors in the last Profile Of A Role Model. We have corrected the errors in this edition.

Interview by NETU ILAVBARE

Letters to the Editor

Dear Readers,

We are pleased to introduce this new page to enable you express your views and opinions on any of the issues we cover in the Growing Up newsletter. Please address your letters to : Letters to the Editor, Growing Up Newsletter, P.O. Box 803 Yaba Lagos. We look forward to receiving your mails

The Growing Up newsletter has been of tremendous help to me as a teenager. Reading the newsletter has made me realise how much I needed to know about growing up as a teenager. Some of the things I've learnt like skills for dealing with sexual pressures, common signs of teen stress, talking to trusted adults, HIV/AIDS and decision-making, have been of great help to me. As a teenager, I've been faced with a lot of challenges on decision-making but with the help of your newsletter I've been able to tackle them. I encourage every teenager not to miss any of your publications. Thank you and keep the good work going.

**- Funke Bajomo
Lagos**

I really appreciate the effort taken to give teenagers tips on what they need to know. I will like to let you know that your newsletter has a beautiful outlook and good quality production. In the editions I have read so far, the "Growing Up Newsletter" is very educative and interesting, especially the story on sexual harassment. It really depicts what girls are going through on our campuses. I wish the magazine could be made available on the newsstand for boys and girls, who are of age. I thank all the staff of the "Growing Up" Newsletter for a job well done.

**- Lanre Komolafe
Lagos**

Dear Editor,

I am a parent of one of your Health and Life Planning Club member (HLPC). As a parent I benefit a lot by reading "Growing Up" Newsletter. I have been able to acquire some knowledge, which I have found useful when talking to my children and other people's children as well. Each time my children read the newsletter, I ask them questions to make sure they understood what the write up was all about. I read every column from true-life story, health talk, career guide, etc. The career guide for instance has made me more knowledgeable about how to guide my children to choose a career and the criteria needed. Also the experiences shared in the true-life stories serve as a guide to young people. Nobody sets out to have a sad/bad experience; so reading the stories help the young people to be more determined not to fall into the same experience. Indeed you are creating a great awareness among youngsters and I commend your Health and Life Planning Club (HLPC) initiative in schools. More grease to your elbow, and may you continue to grow in wisdom.

**- Mrs. Campbell A.A.
Lagos**

Dear Editor,

I got to know about your "Growing Up" Newsletter through a friend of mine when I took it from her to read. Thereafter, things have never remained the same with me. Your Newsletter has made me know a lot about my sexuality and how to be assertive and how to cope with peer pressure. I would like to recommend it to my other friends at school; but I don't know how I can get some copies. Thanks for the good work.

**- Sarah Odujoko
Offa, Kwara State.**

Editor's Note:

Thank you Sarah for your kind comments about the Growing Up newsletter. You can obtain a free copy of the newsletter if you request to have your name included on the mailing list and provide enough stamps for mailing it to you. It costs N60.00 (sixty naira) in stamps to mail each edition of the newsletter within Nigeria. You can also obtain free copies at the AHI youth centre located at 17 Lawal Street Off Oweh Street, Fadeyi, Lagos (near WAEC office)

