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Growing Up

A NEWSLETTER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

THE PLIGHT OF STREET KIDS

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Growing Up
Growing Up is published quarterly in Lagos by Action Health Incorporated (AHI). AHI is a non-profit, non-governmental organization 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, health and youth development programmes.

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THE PLIGH

"...Home was no longer home, so I ran away and became a bus conductor, sleeping at a motor park near the National Stadium at Surulere (Lagos). At least, I am far away from the physical and mental torture of my father's hatred."

A child is a young person between infancy and youth and according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 'a child is any human being below the age of 18'. Every adult had once been a child but not every adult had had the opportunity of relishing childhood in the real sense of it; as it is supposed to be fun seeing the possibility of becoming ones dream person. Childhood is the state or period of being a child, where there is the possibility of rightly predicting the future of a child from the present situations surrounding the child. Hence the cliché "I see a bright future" or "I see a bleak future" for this child. The expression "I see a bleak future" throws a piercing arrow to the *street children*. A street child is any girl or boy who has not reached adulthood, for whom the street has become her or his habitual abode and/or sources of livelihood, and who is inadequately protected, supervised or directed by responsible adults. UNICEF has categorized the street children into three: those living in the street, those working in the street and those who live in the street with their families.

An increasing number of children are being forced to the streets as a result of poverty, abuse, torture, rape, abandonment or being orphaned by AIDS etc. Walking through the roadside of major streets in the centre of most African capitals, towns or urban areas, you find them as common sights. They are stopping cars and people to beg or to ask for work. You will find others shining shoes, selling sundry articles of uncertain origin, or hurrying to wash the windscreen of cars stopped at traffic signals. Yet others would be roaming or gathered in small groups, waiting for something to do. Taking a good look- their faces show strain and sadness, their clothes are ragged and dirty, others appear hungry, suffering from ill-health and malnutrition. At night, you can see them clustered along street corners, in public buildings, uncompleted buildings, in doorways, or in any dry and secluded corner. They are the representatives of a growing multitude of children who have become known as the "street kids"

India is home to the world's largest population of street children, estimated at 11 million. Estimates on the numbers of Brazilian children vary from 200,000 to 10 million. Russia has about 1 million street children. According to data by the Street Educators' Club, the number of street children in Vietnam has shrunk from 21,000 in 2003 to 8,000 in 2007. In Nigeria, demographic analysis of Nigeria has been hindered by a number of factors, principally the difficulty in conducting accurate censuses and a poor tradition of birth and death registration. There are no known statistics of street children in the country. The phenomenon of street children results mainly from family breakdown, which in turn is linked to polygamy and lack of family planning. In an increasing individualistic society, such children quickly learn to survive on their own and in the process are exploited through child labour and trafficking. Street children are found in large numbers in urban and rural areas.

T OF STREET KIDS

By Peculiar Ediomo-Abasi

Most people sometimes ponder in solitude if these children could not stay put wherever they must have been and tolerate the hard situation, instead of getting on the street. Rather than presume, getting to know what it really is like will be best from the street children themselves. This is straight from Ayo, surname withheld, a male street child and bus conductor in Lagos, Nigeria (15 years old).

"I ran from home (Ondo State) to Lagos State because my father separated from my mum and remarried. Since his new wife came in, my dad no longer had time for me, although I was then in school. He wouldn't pay my school fees, wouldn't buy my needs or even visit me. To worsen matters, when I found my way home on holiday, my stepmother and father couldn't tolerate my mistakes. They showed it in everyway possible that they hated me. Home was no longer home, so I ran away and became a bus conductor, sleeping at a motor park near the National Stadium at Surulere (Lagos). At least, I am far away from the physical and mental torture of my father's hatred."

Another street kid,Wura, female, 16 years old had this to say.
"I am on the street hawking to assist my mother who does not have a place to sell her fruit anymore, due to the new development in Lagos. Whatever little I am able to sell is added to what she herself gets to sell too, so that we can eat. If I had a father, maybe I wouldn't be doing this. I don't have a choice, if I don't hawk, we will all starve. I don't have any relative to run to; I only have my mother and my baby brother. My friend here sleeps under the bridge because she can't return to her guardian who gets to rape her when he feels like. We have different reasons being on the street"

Really glaring is the truth that these street children have the streets as a last resort to their grievous situations at home. What stands out is the sad fact that everywhere, children living and working on the streets are ignored, scorned, mistreated and misunderstood by society and governments. "People don't love us" says Tigiste, a 12- year old girl who sells roasted barley and begs for change at stoplights in the Ethiopian capital of Adis Ababa (UNICEF, 1985). The observation made by this young girl illustrates the attitude of most people in the society. Society tends to view these children as troublemakers, a nuisance or menace that needs to be taken off the streets. Few stop to ponder why these children are on the street, where it is apparent they are not enjoying themselves.

Surveys on street children in Nigeria show that majority have mothers who are traders and most have fathers in one employment or the other including the civil service. In a cosmopolitan centre like Lagos, many school dropouts though quite a number were found to have migrated from neighbouring states, are found mostly under bridges, in markets, motor parks, abandoned buildings, premises of schools and such other places where they can eke out a living working in menial jobs like head loading, scavenging waste, begging, hawking, serving as construction workers etc or where they lay their weary heads and rest their tired feet. They live in little groups for mutual support and protection and are highly susceptible to conflict with the law. As the children grow, the boys are branded "area boys", which is an euphemism for street urchins while the girls are branded "prostitutes". These street urchins are the ready scapegoats accused of perpetrating most social ills. Environmental problems arising from overcrowding, violence within the city, transportation chaos etc, are conveniently laid at the doorstep of the urchins and their junior counterparts "the street children".

Of all the agents capable of doing something about the problem of street children, the State is perhaps the best situated to tackle this issue. However, part of the tragedy of street children is the way the government and the society have abandoned them to their fate. Realizing and acknowledging that the problem of street children is one of the most burning problems and challenges facing the African continent, is the first step to addressing this issue. Some of the actions that can be taken to address the issue of street children are:

- The government should review the existing law and enact a specific Child Act to ensure the protection of child rights.
- Education will help break the vicious circle of marginalization and help potential street children towards a better life. It must be noted that street children cannot be motivated to educate themselves while they remain hungry, homeless and in poor health. So education must be accompanied by adequate welfare for these children.
- Outreach and reconciliation of children on the streets to their parents, families and communities. Effort should be made to enquire into the reasons why a child has taken to the streets.

- A sound policy for strengthening families would recognize the family as the basic unit for the human development and would seek to assist it to cope with change by allowing better access to services such as day-care and pre-school education.

- Innovative works for street children has been the exclusive preserve of the private sector. NGO projects have developed many ways to help street children. Their programmes are less expensive, more humane and more affective alternatives to institutionalization. While NGOs are to be applauded in their efforts to address the problem of street children, there is a need to scrutinize the role of many of these NGOs and the extent to which they actually contribute to solving the problem of street children. For instance, some NGOs solicit and receive money to help street children or disabled children and end up using most of the money for administrative services.

- Provision of appropriate care and adequate family substitutes for children who lack their own families. This can be done by encouraging fostering and adoption in appropriate case for children who have no family. Again, children who lack accommodation can be provided with shelter, and particularly if they do not wish to live with step parents.

This is not to mean that nothing has been done as regards the street children. So far, the children are covered by an umbrella legislation promoting or protecting the rights of children in Nigeria, such as the recently passed Children's Act, which enacts largely provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the rights and welfare of the child. The Children's Act 2003 (A federal bill enacting largely, the UNCRC provisions), Children and Young persons Law, Chapter 10 Laws of Lagos State 2003. The most notable of these are the Social Development Policy, 1989 (SDP), and the National Programme of Action for the Survival, Protection and Development of the Nigerian Child, 1992 (NPA). Recognizing that the mental and intellectual capability of children is not the same as those of adults, children who come into conflict with the law are to be treated in a way that does not foreclose their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. On account of this, the international community designed a separate regime for children in the event that they come into conflict with the law. The guiding framework for this is set out in the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Remand homes (Boy's Remand Home, Oregun. Girl's Remand Home, Idi-Araba etc),and Approved Schools for rehabilitation (Boys' Approved School, Isheri. Junior Boy's School, Yaba. And Girl's Approved School, Idi-Araba) are very much at work.

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POEMS

STREET KIDS YOU CALL THEM

The story of Kirk Franklin's new life
Made me think to make a great life
I was 16 years of age
But the situation kept me in a cage
How long will you be a street boy?
Cried a scholar, I looked at myself and said
I must change for good, no more being a liability
This is the story of a street boy.

My mates had the best and were wished the best
I was called a pest because my parents were dead
The government forgot me, you also forgot me
I dropped from school and started smoking the beast
I was advised to visit the clinic and was told I had
Cancer of the lungs. 'I am dead' was all I could cry
Now I am in pains because you rejected me
This is the story of a drop out.

I was the only girl from a wretched home
Stigmatization threw me out of my home
I became a street girl and got pregnant
The insults and names made me determined
To be the best. Now I am in my second year studying
Law. The people who stigmatized me now come for
My help. I am now an achiever not a deceiver
This is the story of a law undergraduate

The street boys and girls, you say have no future
You say they are liabilities to you
But you and the government made them this
Why do you do this to them?
You can make a difference out there
They are not liabilities but they have abilities
Believe in change, it is only a matter of time
If I can, you can, says Sifon.

SIFON EDIOMO ABASI (16 years old)

EXTREMELY UNIQUE

Being extremely unique is being different,
It is like a star in the making,
It is standing out in all you do,
It is doing your things in a way
that cannot be imagined,
It is affecting people's life in a positive way,
It is having a strong moral principle,
Being extremely unique is not going with crowd,
but when you bring out your own style.
Don't stay unique, be *extremely unique*

AKINLADE ABOSEDE (19 years old)

WHAT A TOUR !

I was born in an orphanage
Brought up on the streets
Abandoned, unloved raped and uncared for
This is putting me in a state of insecurity

I was used and abandoned
Raped by men without conscience
I slept in strange homes and hotels
Because, I had to survive.

Oh! How I wish to go to school
And become responsible
Alas! Is it too late?
With my HIV positive status?

If only I was sent to school
Loved and cared for
I wouldn't have ended up like this
Is it too late? NO!

Save us oh Africans!
Save us from this agony
We need care, shelter and education
See if we won't make you proud.

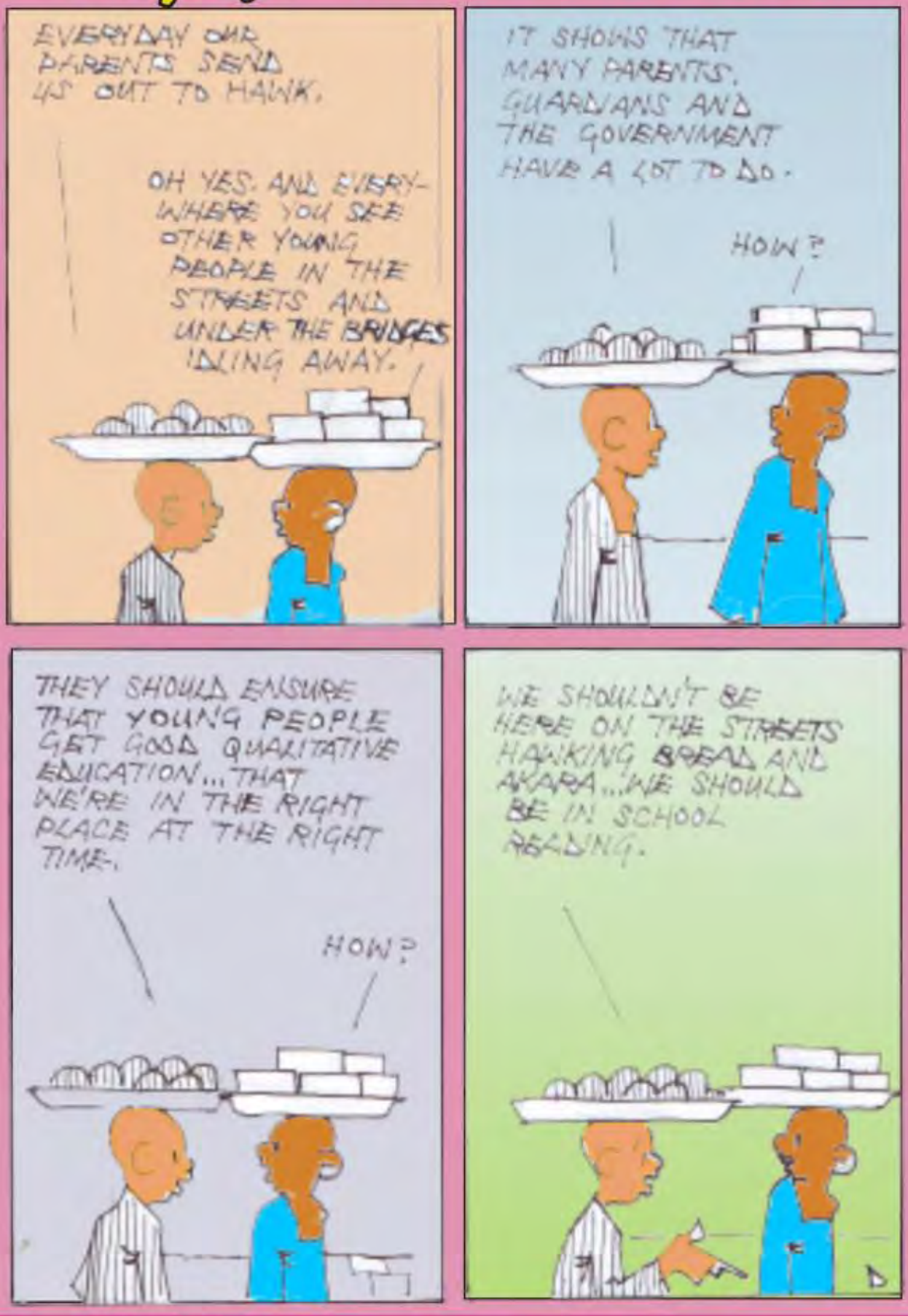
MARY UKPA (15 years old)

VALUE OF TIME

What a time it takes.
Time waits for nobody
It should be well managed and effectively utilized
Because a minute lost is opportunity wasted.
To realize the value of ONE YEAR,
ask a student who is repeating a class.
To realize the value of ONE MONTH,
ask a mother who just gave birth to a premature baby.
To realize the value of ONE HOUR,
ask the lovers who are waiting to meet.
To realize the value of ONE SECOND,
ask a person who just avoided an accident.
To realize the value of ONE MILLISECOND,
ask an Olympic silver medalist
Yesterday is HISTORY, tomorrow is MYSTERY,
and today is a GIFT.
That is why it is called the PRESENT.

DAMILOLA ADEWALE (19 years old)

Cartoon


EVERYDAY OUR PARENTS SEND US OUT TO HAWK.
OH YES. AND EVERY-WHERE YOU SEE OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE STREETS AND UNDER THE BRIDGES IDLING AWAY.
IT SHOWS THAT MANY PARENTS, GUARDIANS AND THE GOVERNMENT HAVE A LOT TO DO.
HOW?
THEY SHOULD ENSURE THAT YOUNG PEOPLE GET GOOD QUALITATIVE EDUCATION... THAT WE'RE IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME.
HOW?
WE SHOULDN'T BE HERE ON THE STREETS HAWKING BREAD AND AKARA... WE SHOULD BE IN SCHOOL READING.

NEWSREEL

AHI MARKS INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)

AHI joined the rest of the world to mark the International Day Against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) on February 6, 2009. On this day, AHI reaffirmed its longstanding position that FGM is a harmful practice and that all girls deserve to live free from all forms of violence, including FGM.

The event which took place at the Multi- purpose hall of AHI aimed at creating awareness among young people on this harmful Sexual Health practice as well as to provide accurate information on how FGM affects the health of adolescent girls.

This year's theme, **"Understanding Our Right: Addressing Harmful Sexual Health Practices"** featured a lecture presentation on the effects and consequences of the practice and suggestions on how the practice can be eliminated. Others activities were role plays, a video play back and a quiz competition among participating Secondary Schools. Prizes were given to representatives of these schools.

A drama presentation by young people portraying the harmful effects of FGM

Female Genital Mutilation is a partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural, religious or other non-therapeutic reasons. The damage caused by FGM is serious and multiple. These include intense pain followed by the loss of all sensitivity in the genital area at best; at worse, internal and/or external bleeding, infections, infertility or even death. It is often performed on minors or even infants, in disastrous unhygienic conditions. They often use a blunt knife or razor-blade without administering anesthetics.
Approximately 150 million women and girls worldwide have undergone FGM and it is most common in parts of West, East and Central Africa, some parts of the Middle East and South Asia.

VALENTINE'S DAY CELEBRATION

The Valentine's Day was celebrated in AHI with the theme ***"Pleasure and Responsibility: Building Loving and Mutually Rewarding Relationships" on February 14, 2009.*** The programme aimed at helping young people understand the true meaning of love and to build skills that promote good and responsible relationships. It also aimed at promoting unity, fostering peace, harmony and showing kindness to the less privileged in the society.

Highlight of the programme was a lecture presentation titled, "***"Pleasure and Responsibility: Building Loving and Mutually Rewarding Relationships".***

During the lecture, the facilitator defined love as having deep and warm feelings about oneself and others stressing that it involves happiness and responsibilities. She also enumerated the different types of love; ways of expressing love; qualities of love; behaviours that enhance loving relationships as well as myths and facts about love. The event was also used to teach young people about self- esteem and to differentiate between love and infatuation.

Several questions asked by the youngsters were clarified at the end of the lecture.

The year's edition featured comedy segments and various musical presentations by young people from schools in Lagos State. Groups like Omoba, B Wright, A.Y Teller, X-Flames and J.Loyd held the audience spell- bound with their musical renditions.

The climax of the event was the cutting of the Valentine's cake which was carried out by participants.

More than 150 young people present at the event were happy to be part of the laudable programme and therefore promised to strive to avoid any form of risky behaviour.

ADOLESCENT REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH EDUCATION (ARHE) TRAINING PROGRAMME

Twenty-three (23) young people drawn from Secondary Schools in Somolu, Kosofe and Mainland Local Education Districts of Lagos State were from February 10 – March 19, 2009 trained in Adolescent Reproductive Health issues. The programme which took place at the Multi-purpose hall of AHI sought to increase the knowledge of young people in areas of sexual and reproductive health and development as well as build their capacity and get them into becoming peer educators.

Various facilitation techniques used included role play, group work, demonstration, experience sharing, case scenarios and case studies. This was to facilitate effective learning as sessions were interactive and participatory. The training sessions covered areas such as Anatomy and Physiology of the Male and Female Reproductive System; Self Esteem and Body Image; Assertiveness and Negotiation; Puberty and Menstruation; Values and Values Clarification; Decision Making and Goal Setting; Goals of HLPC and Roles of Health Educators, Teenage Pregnancy and Unsafe Abortion; STIs and HIV/AIDS; Friendship, Love and Dating; Contraception; Risk Reduction Techniques; Communication; Abstinence: Harmful Traditional Practices; Sexual Abuse and Finding Help; Gender Roles and Gender Issues; Facilitation Techniques and First Aid.

Participants at the training

Participants pose with their certificates at the end of the training. With them are AHI facilitators

At the end of the training, participants were expected to have acquired knowledge on Sexuality; know more about adolescent health and development; become peer educators and after the training be able to teach others what they learnt. They also had the opportunity to share experiences with their peers and to ask questions on growing up issues.

The event witnessed an award of certificates to participants and a graduation ceremony.

The ARHE Course is one of the programmes designed by Action Health Incorporated (AHI) to promote Adolescent Sexual Health. The course addresses issues of Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health as they relate to attitude; behavior and values which would enable young people make informed choices regarding their Sexual and Reproductive Health. The course also seeks to educate adolescents on the life skills they need in order to make responsible decisions concerning their sexuality.

COMMUNITY PROJECT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

About 2.4 billion people globally live under highly unsatisfactory conditions and as such, have poor hygienic behaviour with an attendant exposure to risks of incidence and spread of infectious diseases. It was in the light of this that AHI Youth Interns and other young people within Kosofe/Somolu/Mainland Local Education District on March 21, 2009 embarked on a community project tagged, ***'SAY NO TO DIRT'.***

The community service sought to promote environmental cleanliness as well as create awareness on the need to promote personal hygiene.

Participants who were divided into groups were involved in the cleaning of the streets and the drainage systems around Oweh, Lawal, Shiro streets and the environs. They later had an educational session on how young people can maintain good personal hygiene.

PROPOSAL WRITING COURSE FOR NGOS

The capacity to write good proposals has become indispensable for non- governmental organizations and individuals who have to convince potential supporters to fund their social development projects. To this end, Action Health Incorporated (AHI) from March 23- 27, 2009 conducted a Proposal Writing Course for representatives of Nigerian NGOs and CBOs.

A cross-section of course participants

The capacity building programme which took place at the AHI Training Hall aimed at providing participants the opportunity to understand the key components of a fundable proposal as well as to improve their knowledge and skills in writing good proposals.

The course was facilitated by resource persons who have built a career on writing successful proposals to mobilize resources for social development projects. Participants were provided step-by-step hands- on guidance on how to write winning proposals.

Formal lectures, brainstorming, individual and small group exercises individual material development and class presentations were incorporated into the programme to facilitate learning and skills building. At the end of the course, participants were able to develop the outline of a fundable project proposal; generate a list of potential funders and funding sources that match their project/organizational mandates and write a proposal in line with their area of interest while matching the project's goal with the potential funder's mandate.

12 participants drawn from various NGOs across the country took part in the programme.

TRAINING OF FINAL YEAR MEDICAL STUDENTS

The collaboration between Action Health Incorporated (AHI) and the Institute of Child Health and Primary Care, of the College of Medicine, Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) was given a boost with the training of final year Medical students on Adolescent Youth Friendly Health Services.

The programme which took place at the AHI Youth Centre on March 25 and April 1, 2009 aimed at ensuring that students broadened their knowledge on adolescent reproductive and sexual health and know the processes involved in providing health services for adolescents.

It also afforded participants who were in two batches the opportunity to acquire skills on how to counsel young people on some of their sexual health challenges.

The curriculum consisted of topics such as ***Understanding Human Sexuality*** and the students had the opportunity to break the culture of silence on issues relating to sexuality; ***Principles of Adolescents' Friendly Health Services***. In preparing the students for the challenges of providing for adolescents, they had a formal training on attributes of service providers and facility that would attract young people to such services.

Apart from formal lectures, other methodologies such as brainstorming, experience sharing, value clarification exercises were employed basically to facilitate learning and skills building.

121 students participated in the programme.

Group photograph of some of the Medical Students and the facilitators

PHOTO REPORT

International Cultural Youth Exchange (ICYE) volunteers visit AHI

Action Health Incorporated (AHI) on February 25, 2009 played host to members of the International Cultural Youth Exchange (ICYE). They were received on arrival by the Executive Director, AHI, Mrs. Nike Esiet who welcomed them to the organization and were later taken round the facilities. The field trip was basically to undertaken to familiarize the ICYE with AHI activities which are geared towards the promotion of adolescent health and development.

The ICYE is a non – profit organization whose mandate is to facilitate respectful and open interactions between people from different cultural backgrounds and promoting cooperation and a fruitful exchange between volunteers coming from both, the northern and the southern hemisphere.

Dear Diary

MONDAY

I woke up today refreshed as never before. I was very happy as we are resuming today. I would finally get to see my friends, classmates, teachers, and well wishers. Ozoma and Amarachi did not come today neither did Agnes. And the bad news is that I can't go to their houses because they are far from where I live. Well I just have to get through today without them.

TUESDAY

I woke up this morning thanking God for keeping my family and I alive. At least, I am not living on the streets. As I went to school, I felt happy and satisfied. But I soon felt a pang of sadness because Amarachi, Ozoma, and Agnes did not come to school, maybe they were still enjoying their holidays, but I still had hope that they would come. Chidozie, my school mate told us a story of how he saw a girl on the street who was been beaten by a group of thugs and how he rescued her and took her home. His mother accepted her and soon they contacted the Police. He said the case has been settled because she is now with her parents. At first, I felt sorry for her but am happy she is well and fine.

WEDNESDAY

On my way from school today, I saw a young boy lying on the street. He was bleeding profusely and no one made any move to help him. I was horrified and at the same time angry at the on lookers who just watched without caring if he was dead or not. After much enquiry, I was told that a hit and run driver knocked him down as he was hawking. I looked around and saw his wares scattered on the ground, I also learnt that he lived on the streets and he hawked to make a living. I was shocked, and started wondering why a young boy could be living on the streets. I asked why they didn't rush him to the hospital and they said they didn't want to get involved with the Police. Unfortunately, the boy bled and gave up the ghost. When I got home I narrated the story to Mum who really felt bad.

THURSDAY

Amarachi is yet to come to school, her sister who came told me that she said she would resume next week Monday. Thank God Ozoma and Agnes came today, I was very glad to see them. I told Ozoma; Agnes and Chidozie what happened the previous day. They advised me to go and see our teacher, I asked them to come with me and they all agreed. I repeated the incidence to our teacher who really felt bad. She said that human lives should always take precedence over the fear of the Police who should be friends to the citizens. She also said that government should encourage citizens to help people who are victims of accidents whether or not the Police are around or within the vicinity.

FRIDAY

There is public holiday today which means I am not going to school, I don't have to wake up by five o clocks today. I will also have to prepare for my debate on Monday which I am supporting the motion which says that "government should rehabilitate youths on the streets". I hope my group wins. I later visited Agnes and we talked on many issues affecting our lives, after which we read our books.

SATURDAY

I have to be very good today because I want to ask mum if I could attend Amarachi's birthday party which comes up tomorrow. I didn't tell her yesterday because I sensed she was in a bad mood. Now is my chance to tell her because she is happy. When I eventually told her, she didn't object and I felt on top of the world.

SUNDAY

Wow! I'm going to church today. In the afternoon I will go to Amarachi's house for the birthday party. I've already bought the gift I'm going to give her. I eventually went and we all had fun. I met all my class mates and friends. It was really a big party and everybody was happy. While coming back from the party somewhere close to the BRT bus-stop around my area, something caught my eye. Oh God! it can't be, this can't be happening to me. I couldn't run. I just stood there frozen. What I saw made me buckle. Guess what happened? Get the gist in the next edition.

Parent-child relationship: Parents should support, care and show love to their children. They are to be corrected with love and perseverance. Every child deserves a happy family; a place where he or she has a sense of belonging and comfort.

My Question - 3 in 1 Service
Go ask your Questions

MyQ a 3 in 1 service that provides accurate and non-judgmental answers about Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS issues for young people:

To get answers to your questions:

- Send a text message to **38120 on MTN** mobile free of charge
- Call **08027192781** on Celtel mobile
- Email your questions to **MyQ@learningaboutliving.com or go to www.learningaboutliving.com/MyQ.**

MyA is a monthly competition for young people to win prizes by answering a monthly question. Each month, 10 winners will be picked from the qualified entries and given airtime sponsored by **NACA.**

Vocational skills acquisition: Not all young people will become graduates of conventional tertiary institutions. Others should be encouraged and given the opportunity to learn certain vocational skills as they can make a decent living from the skills acquired in future.

Fruits and vegetables are good for us-but why?

Fruits and vegetables are good for us – but why?

A lot of people, particularly young people, do not eat a mixed, balanced diet with a wide variety of foods and enough fruits and vegetables. It is widely accepted that fruits and vegetables are good for us and many national governments run promotions aimed at encouraging increased consumption. There is an adage that says, 'An apple a day, keeps the doctor away'. ***Why should we eat our fruits and vegetables?***

The human body needs to get a number of different compounds from food, to keep us healthy, fit and active. This is just a brief look at what fruits and vegetables have to offer.

Fruits and vegetables provide us with a range of compounds, many of which have more than one role, being involved both with immediate good health and with protection against diseases that develop over a long period of time, such as cancer, heart conditions, stroke and diabetes.

Vitamins are essential substances that the human body cannot make for itself so we have to get them from food. Profound deficiency quickly leads to serious illness and lower-than-optimum intake will affect general well-being and quality of life. The fat-soluble vitamins A, E and K are stored by the body so although regular intake is needed this does not have to be everyday. Vitamin A is essential for growth and normal function of the retina of the eye. Red, orange and yellow fruits and vegetables are a good source of pro-vitamin A, which is converted in the body. Vitamin E, found in vegetable oils, seed oils, cereals and avocado pears, is a potent antioxidant, involved in the formation of body tissues. Vitamin K, found in fresh green vegetables and fruit, is necessary for normal blood clotting.

The water-soluble vitamins B and C, are not stored in the body so must be eaten frequently to maintain good health. Vitamin B is made up of several compounds essential for a healthy metabolism. Green leafy vegetables, mushrooms and fruits are good sources. The complex comprises B_1 (thiamine), B_2 (riboflavin), B_6 (pyridoxine), B_{12} (folate) and B_3 (niacin). These vitamins have been traditionally grouped together because of similarities in their properties and functions.

Vitamin C is needed for healthy gums, teeth and bones and it helps to speed up wound healing. Acute-deficiency leads to scurvy. Vitamin C, along with vitamin E, is a potent antioxidant; it has a role in enhancing the action of vitamin E and in aiding the absorption of iron. Good sources of vitamin C are citrus fruits, berries, blackcurrants, sweet peppers and green, leafy vegetables. Potatoes contain modest amounts of vitamin C but they are a useful source as we eat them regularly and in fairly large proportions.

Minerals are needed in enzyme systems and for other body functions. Potassium, which is mainly derived from fruits and vegetables, has an important role in health. Deficiency leads to muscular weakness, mental confusion and heart problems. The amounts of minerals contained in fruits and vegetables depend on variety, climate, cultivation and soil type.

The body needs iron to make haemoglobin. Haemoglobin is the substance that makes your red blood cells red and is used to carry oxygen around the body. Meat and fish are good sources of easily absorbed iron. Some plant foods, such as beans and lentils, also contain a lot of iron but it is not in a form that is easily absorbed by the body. To help improve iron absorption from plant foods it is recommended that you eat vitamin C rich fruits or drink a glass of fruit juice with the meal.

Fruits and vegetables help to protect us from illnesses that take time to develop. What we eat now will affect our health in twenty years time – the time taken for some illnesses such as heart disease and cancer to develop. Fruits and vegetables are sources of a range of antioxidants, the so-called ACE vitamins, (vitamins A, C and E), which help to prevent DNA damage. Lycopene, found in tomatoes and the compound, lutein, found in broccoli, spinach and red peppers are also potent antioxidants.

Other protective compounds from fruit and vegetables include carotenoids, flavonoids, isothiocyanates and other substances that are often grouped together as 'phytochemicals'. Phytochemicals simply means, plant chemicals. They contribute to the vivid, bright colours found in fruits and vegetables, which have a profound effect on our health.

Sinigrin, from Brussels sprouts, helps to protect us from cancer. It works by persuading pre-cancerous cells to commit suicide by a natural process called apoptosis. Sulphoraphane, from broccoli, also has powerful anti-cancer effects but, unlike sinigrin, it works by blocking cancer rather than suppressing it. Other vegetables such as cabbage, cauliflower and kale also have useful amounts of these protective phytochemicals.

The carotenoids, -carotene, -carotene and -cryptoxanthin have pro-vitamin A activity and are converted into vitamin A in the body. Carrots and pumpkins are excellent sources of -carotene and carrots, spinach, peaches and apricots are rich sources of -carotene and -cryptoxanthin occurs in oranges and some other fruits.

The beneficial components of fruits and vegetables reinforce one another and we get best overall effect by eating a wide range of produce.

What we eat does affect our health. We need to eat some foods from each of the four main groups every day.

These groups are:

·starchy foods, which include bread, pasta, rice, breakfast cereals and potatoes
·dairy products that include milk, cheese and yoghurt
·meat and fish
·fruits and vegetables

Fresh, frozen and canned fruits and vegetables are all useful.

Enjoy your food and remember eating is supposed to be fun and having fun is all part of a healthy lifestyle.

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QUIZ FOR YOUNG MINDS

WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE USE DRUGS?

There are many reasons why young people use illegal drugs, some of which are listed below. It is important for parents to recognize that the reasons young people take drugs are similar to those given for adults' use of alcohol and tobacco, or indeed, the use of drugs in their younger days!

Illegal drugs may be used by young people because they:

1. Enjoy the short term effects the drugs produce
2. Think its FUN!
3. Have friends who use them
4. Have nothing else to do
5. Find that some drugs are cheap and easily available
6. Are trying to rebel or want to shock their parents or other authority figure;
7. Are curious and want to experiment
8. Want to experience effects like those obtained from drinking large amounts of alcohol
9. Want to feel grown-up
10. Associate the drugs with a particular 'SCENE' or 'CULTURE
11. Want to take risks
12. Want to escape from problems

LET'S SEE HOW SHARP YOU ARE. ANSWER TRUE OR FALSE TO THESE QUESTIONS

1. Cannabis is often injected

True or False

2. Cannabis is a completely safe drug to use
True or False

3. You cannot be arrested for possessing Cannabis
True or False

4. Cannabis is always smoked with tobacco

True or False

5. The effects of LSD can be very scary

True or False

6. The effects of LSD can last for about an hour

True or False

7. Drugs like heroin and ecstasy often have other things mixed in with them

True or False

8. Cocaine slows your heart and pulse rate down

True or False

9. More young males than females smoke cigarettes.

True or False

10. Some athletes take anabolic steroids hoping that they will perform better.
True or False

11. Cocaine is addictive.

True or False

12. People who drink are in danger of developing liver disease.

True or False

13. Steroids can stunt your growth.

True or False

REFERENCE:
www.drugslife.org.uk/index (accessed 23/03/2009)

WATCH YOUR MANNERS

PHONE ETIQUETTE

Calling On the Phone

Courtesy is as important in speaking over the phone as in talking to people face to face. Phone calls generally should not be made before 7:00 in the morning or after 9:30/10:00 at night. Try to avoid mealtimes. **A person should always be certain of the number he is dialing to avoid disturbing someone unnecessarily. If you do reach a wrong number, it is important to say "I'm sorry, I dialed the wrong number." before hanging up. After someone answers the phone, the caller should give his or her name before asking for the person desired.**

When you talk on the telephone, remember to: Express yourself clearly and concisely. The person at the other end of the phone cannot see your facial expressions or gestures and the impression he receives depends on what she hears. The telephone carries your voice at its natural volume and pitch. Try not to shout but speak clearly and distinctly.

Answering the Phone

The correct way to answer a telephone is "Hello." "Yes" is abrupt and a bit harsh. "Hello" is the most proper way to answer the telephone. **When the telephone in the home is answered by someone other than the head of the house and someone says, "May I speak to Mrs. Brown, please?" he or she should say, "Just a moment, please." If Mrs. Brown is unable to come to the phone, the correct reply is "Mrs. Brown can't come to the phone now. May I have your name, and she will call you back as soon as possible?" If you must put the telephone down during the conversation, do it gently, and when you hang up, do it gently. DO NOT SLAM THE RECEIVER DOWN. The person at the other end may still have the phone close to his ear, and then a sudden sharp bang can be hurtful as well as rude.**

1. Speak softly not LOUDLY: You do not have to yell to be heard. Mobile phones are designed for conversation at normal volume levels. Talk as you would talk to other people or on a landline phone. The person you are talking to even has a volume button on his or her phone. You can keep your voice low and discreet by directing your face down and slightly into your chest. If you are not sure if you are too loud, watch the reaction of people near you.

2. Keep your distance from those around you: Each person is surrounded by a personal space, respect that. Speak in places at least 5m away from the closest person. If there is no separate, private area available for your call, wait to speak on the phone until a good space is available. Crowded rooms, lines and tight hallways are not places to carry on phone conversations. If you're in an enclosed area and need to take a call, pick up the call, but don't start talking until you're out of the room. There's nothing worse than disturbing people around you with your ring tone, only to annoy them further by starting your conversation in their presence!

3. **Keep your private conversations private:** Do not add stress to other people's lives. Nobody else wants to hear about your private problems and conflicts, so pay attention to the surrounding audience. Nobody wants to hear an angry voice, so be polite, and use pleasant tone on a phone. Talking confidential business issues in a public place may also risk your company's future business.

4. **Do not keep others waiting**: Your time is not more valuable that anyone else's. Nobody wants to wait for you to finish your conversation. Put the phone down, turn off your phone, call back later and concentrate on what you

5. Do not break off face-to-face conversations to answer your phone: If you receive a call during a conversation, send the call to your voicemail or answering service. Your first priority should be to the person you are with. Remember, you do not have to answer the phone, so just switch off your phone when required. It's also advisable not to use your earpiece in the presence of others, other people don't know if you are with them or not.

***6.* Choose the time and place of your calls wisely:** Do not make calls in noisy areas or places where network coverage is poor. If your network does not provide good quality coverage, change your operator.

***7.* Know how to communicate over the phone:** Check if it is appropriate time to call and remember global time zones. Your idea of an emergency is not the same as someone else's. People should not be fired via a mobile phone. Do not send offensive or threatening messages! Remember that the receiver can always save messages and easily identify the sender. Some users have to pay to pick up their messages. So also keep your messages brief.

8. **Do one thing at a time:** Multi-tasking is not cool and you can't really do it properly and safely anyway. Pay attention to what you are doing as multi-tasking can be hazardous, rude and inefficient. The person you are talking to deserves your full attention.

***9.* Respect camera phone rules:** Camera phone misuse has already become a problem. Respect others' privacy and do not use in-phone cameras anywhere a normal camera would be considered inappropriate, such as in art galleries, change rooms or toilets. Ask for permission before you take someone's picture. Some venues do not allow the use of cameras and may refuse entry to someone with one.

Be a responsible mobile phone user by being considerate to others!

Common Telephone Courtesy Hints

(1) Make sure of the correct number so as not to risk disturbing strangers.

(2 Make sure that your conversations with busy people are as brief as possible.

(3) When calling friends who do not recognize your voice, announce yourself right away.

(4) Time your calls so as not to interfere with the work schedule of those you call.

(5) Make business calls well before the close of the office hours.

(6) After dialing a wrong number simply say, "Sorry, wrong number."

(7) When the number you are calling is not answered quickly, wait long enough for someone to put aside what he or she is doing. It is very annoying to have been disturbed just to pick up the telephone and find the caller has hung up.

Reference:

- **www.Library.thinkquest.org/LOUIS SHARO BOOKS FOR MANNERS (accessed 08/02/2009)**

Cross Word Puzzle

By Abdul-Azeez Oguntoyinbo

Hello boys and girls! Unravel this puzzle and see how far you can go.

D	E	S	O	C	S	V	S	Y	H	T	U	P	M
C	I	B	J	U	K	T	P	N	H	B	S	T	U
O	S	R	X	R	S	T	G	E	Y	Y	E	N	S
Y	D	E	M	E	R	N	R	N	C	D	S	E	S
E	R	H	T	E	I	A	S	O	H	E	A	M	E
N	U	O	A	L	P	Y	V	I	E	N	E	T	N
U	G	I	A	E	M	I	N	T	M	I	S	N	L
M	S	E	U	P	R	C	M	C	I	C	I	E	L
M	H	T	T	U	O	T	I	A	C	I	D	R	I
I	I	O	S	S	A	D	O	E	A	D	J	T	C
C	M	H	T	L	A	E	H	R	L	E	C	Y	M
S	M	E	D	I	C	P	H	A	R	M	A	C	Y
D	U	P	J	S	G	U	R	D	S	U	R	G	E

MEDICAL TERMS

PSYCHO, DRUGS, HERBS, SURGE, TESTS, MEDICINE, CURE, HEALING, ILLNESS, CHEMICAL, HEALTH, DISEASES, REACTION, IMMUNE, TREATMENT, THERAPEUTIC, MEDIC, SYMPTOMS, PHARMACY, VIRUSREMEDY

D	0	L	P	E	G	U	I	L	T	Y	U	S	A
T	Y	D	R	A	P	O	E	J	F	P	O	I	E
D	T	D	E	L	B	M	A	G	R	L	Y	N	M
R	A	F	I	G	H	T	I	O	A	A	L	C	I
A	W	C	O	S	R	V	S	F	U	G	S	R	R
W	H	A	C	T	G	E	S	F	D	E	U	I	C
S	S	S	O	U	C	R	R	C	Y	L	O	M	U
C	I	E	P	U	S	O	A	N	O	L	I	I	L
A	L	S	T	Y	B	E	Z	C	C	I	C	N	C
L	O	I	S	T	U	O	T	E	E	O	I	A	O
S	O	C	K	S	M	I	N	A	L	F	V	T	P
N	F	E	C	A	E	U	L	F	N	I	U	E	T
A	U	T	N	E	M	H	S	I	N	U	P	L	E

STREET, FEAR, KIDS, DRAW, DISTURBANCE, SOCKS, RASCALS, CRIMINAL, GUM

SUCCESS DIGEST

"READING AND UNDERSTANDING"

by Tawakalit Ajao

Do you know that out of 100% of people who usually prepare for exams only 20% of them pass the rest which is 80% fail? They either blame their teachers/lectures or complain about little or no time not knowing that they ought to blame themselves for failing to understand what they've been thought and what they've read. Well, this leads us to the topic "reading and understanding". The term "reading" simply means revising or studying to gain knowledge for a particular purpose or driven interest. While understanding simply means to know or realize the how or why something happens, how it works or why it is important and it's meaning or definition.

Reading and understanding means ability to comprehend and digest effectively the subject of the matter of what has been read to enhance and yield positive result. Most people and especially young people find it difficult to read and understand. This may be due to some constraints like, laziness, lack of determination, low self esteem, lack of discipline, inability to cope and determine their area of interest, peer pressure, lack of time management, family background, false beliefs, excessive social life, environmental conditions, over anxiety, doing two things at a time and lots more, all contribute to the inability to read and understand/comprehend. A lot of young people have found it very difficult to juxtapose between these two words and so ended up reading and cramming instead of reading and understanding.

Here are the tips that aid reading and understanding:

1. A conducive environment: Most people especially young people have misinterpreted the word conducive to mean a place where there is food and nourishment, this is very wrong because a conducive environment is an environment free of noise, disturbance and all other pollutant like fumes from car, heavy sounds from radios, television set, loud speakers, etc. which could hinder the rate of understanding and comprehending.

2. Discovering area of interest: This can help a lot especially when you have a specific topic you intend to study or read about. This would avoid glancing through the entire book thereby wasting time and at the end of the day yielding negative result.

3. Total concentration: To have a complete understanding of what you want to read there is need for submissiveness and seriousness towards achieving a better result and in fact best result. Because two things cannot be done at a time, the major reason so many people read and fail to understand is due to diversification. They tend to divide their attention into two like listening to music on the cause of reading, watching television set, playing why reading, and talking or gisting during the process of reading, eating, this could automatically lead to lack of understanding for such person as your activities would be sending wrong information to the brain.

4. Time management: A large number of people find it difficult to use their time judiciously and thereby fail to achieve their goal. Time management is very important in reading because the more time you spend for reading determines the apex of your understanding. Quite a number of young people find it difficult to set their time to read and understand due to the fact that they create little or no time for themselves to study thereby leading to failure.

5. Gong for recreation: This is when you go for a recess otherwise known as break after reading so as to allow the brain to accumulate and save all that has been read for easy access to proper functioning and understanding and thereby excelling in it.

6. Discipline: This is having control or power over one's body and habit, most scholars refer to it as positive punishment. It involves strict adherence to doing one thing for a particular purpose. Discipline in reading therefore means ability to have total power over all delaying factors that could deteriorate the cause of reading. A large number of people lack discipline towards reading like dozing off when reading, singing when reading, skipping a lot of important areas when reading, receiving calls when reading, all these and lots more hinder the rate of understanding or comprehending.

7. Jotting: This is very essential when reading as enough information may not be stored into the brain properly, but jotting down the most important areas could help foster the rate of understanding because jotting simply means storing and saving information for records purposes, it is like a computer whatever you store in it is what you get back i.e. GIGO.

8. Continuous assessment: This is when you assess yourself to try to remember what you've read and regularly reading it for better understanding.

10. Time out: This is the process whereby you engage yourself with groups of people and try to share opinions about what you've read, doing this will not only help in understanding but also create an inter relationship and friendship.

Do not under estimate the capability of the brain because whatever information you store into the brain if it is saved properly, the peak of understanding would be achieved.

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www.josseybass.com/WileyCDA (accessed 20/02/2009)
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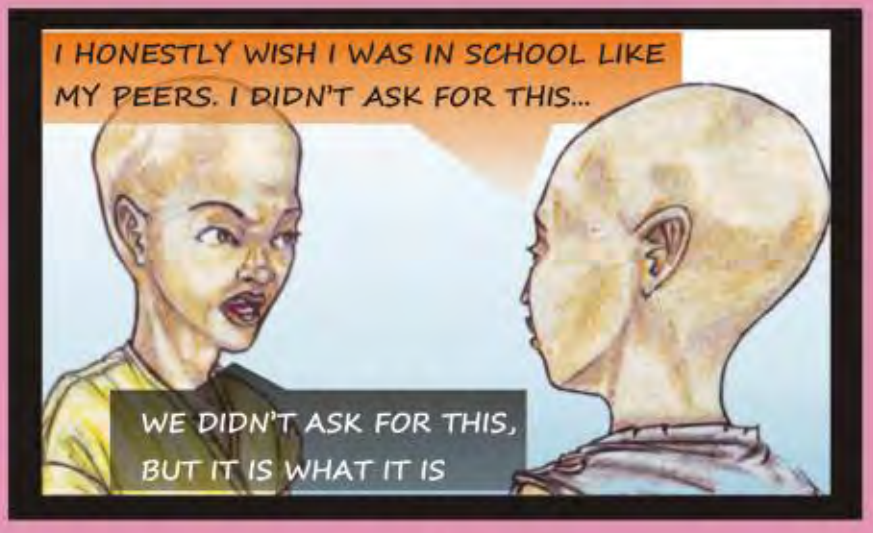
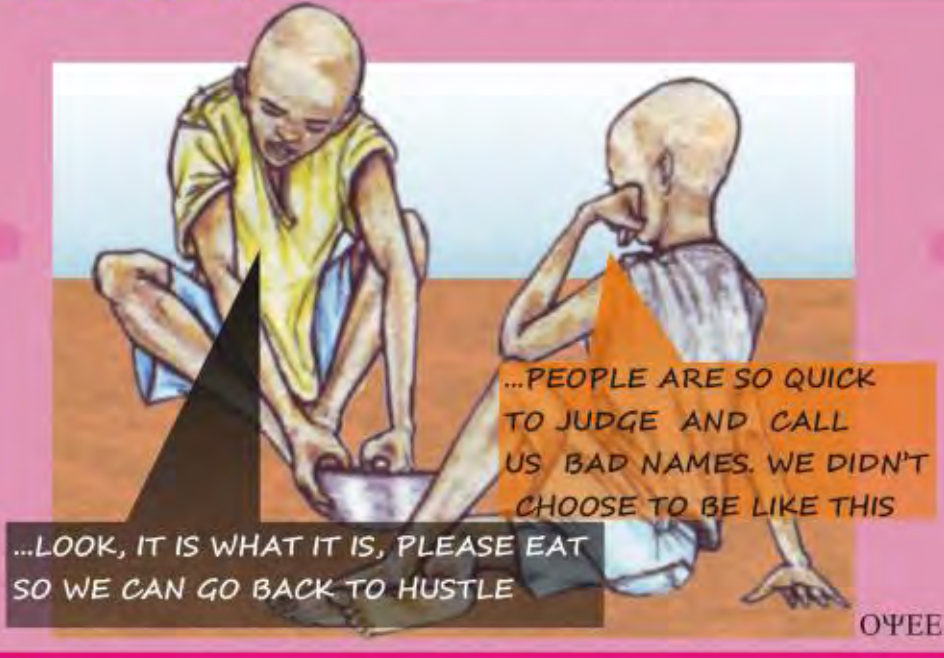
Cartoon 2


I HONESTLY WISH I WAS IN SCHOOL LIKE MY PEERS. I DIDN'T ASK FOR THIS...
WE DIDN'T ASK FOR THIS, BUT IT IS WHAT IT IS

ALL THIS COULD HAVE BEEN AVERTED IF OUR PARENTS HAD SHOWN US MORE LOVE, GIVEN US SHELTER AND SENT US TO SCHOOL, SO THAT WE CAN BECOME RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE...
...ALSO THE GOVERNMENT COULD REALLY HELP US, IN TERMS OF PROVIDING BASIC EDUCATION FOR US, AND EVEN SHELTER...


...PEOPLE ARE SO QUICK TO JUDGE AND CALL US BAD NAMES. WE DIDN'T CHOOSE TO BE LIKE THIS
...LOOK, IT IS WHAT IT IS, PLEASE EAT SO WE CAN GO BACK TO HUSTLE
OΨEE

True Life Story

HOW MY RELATIVES DESTROYED ME

My name is Susan. I come from Enugu. I am the only child of my parents who weren't rich but were satisfied with what they had. As the only child, I was pampered and well taken care of. There was love, peace and happiness in our home. My uncle and his wife lived with us, I was fond of them and they were also very fond of me. Then fate dealt me a great blow. My parents attended a marriage ceremony and never came back. At first, I was shocked when I heard they were involved in a motor accident and then it turned to anger for leaving me alone in this world. Later, I became terrified and bitter, I cried all day and my voice became hoarse. I could barely speak, I could not eat nor. I overheard aunty Ifeoma telling Uncle Jude that my parents died as a result of the accident while returning from the marriage ceremony. She tried to console me by telling me that my parents would not like to see me so unhappy. She even promised to take care of me. She gave me food and after eating I slept off and when I woke up I felt a little better

A week later, my aunty came to inform me that my father's relatives were planning to steal my father's properties and probably send me out of the house. I started crying and she told me not to worry that she wouldn't allow them even if it was with her last breath. I thanked her for being there for me. She narrated how kind my parents were to her and promised to reciprocate this kind gesture. I did not think much of the case again because I had buried my self in sorrow that I hardly notice what was happening around me. Even if I did I couldn't do anything about it. I remember how my parents helped these same relatives who now want to send me out of my father's house.

Two days later aunty Ifeoma asked me if I knew where my father kept his documents. According to her, she wanted to get them before my so called relatives got them.

I knew my daddy kept them in the bedroom so I told her to check there. When she found them I noticed that she was in high spirit throughout the day. Initially, I thought she was happy because, having gotten the documents; she would use them against my relatives and discourage them from taking over the house. To my utmost surprise, the next day, Aunty Ifeoma and some other relatives gathered in our parlour and consequently, summoned me. I didn't know what was happening until one of them told me to leave the house and never to return as the house didn't belong to my dead parents. They were lying of course, because dad had repeatedly told me how he suffered to build this house. How could they do this to me? Even aunty Ifeoma whom my dad had shown love and kindness conspired to drive me out of the house. How can people be so cruel and greedy? Where did they expect me to go to? All these came to my head and no answer.

I start cried and begged them and all these pleas fell on deaf ears. Even Uncle Jude was indifferent. I immediately, became afraid. At 15 years, I didn't have anybody to look up to. No friend, with nothing to call my own. I realized how insecure I was. Thus my life began on the street. I slept under the Palm grove bridge and in the middle of the night, some boys came and I was powerless as I was raped repeatedly. I started begging for money and food in order to survive. I even stole sometimes. I was dirty and unkempt and actually wished to die. If only my parents were alive.

One faithful day I met Vivian, who was also living on the street. She had been around much longer than me and was street wise. She said she liked me a lot and from there, we became inseparable. She soon introduced me into prostitution. We were able to make money to buy new clothes and improve our appearance. We slept with all types of men just for money. This continued for about four years until one fateful day. On this day, I started feeling some pains all over my body. I didn't know what was happening to me. I was stooling at an alarming rate and I had become lean. My friend, Vivian took me to the hospital. In the hospital, I was subjected to various tests and I had to pay from the little money I had saved. Later that day, the young doctor, called me aside and showed me the result of the tests and started counseling me on the implication. Behold, I was HIV positive. My initial reaction was that of anger. Anger at the world that was so cruel to me; anger at the high level of injustice and anger at the wickedness of my relatives. I knew only a miracle could save me. Right now, I'm dedicating my life to the service of God and my church members have been helpful. I have also forgiven my relatives for all they did to me. I know God has forgiven me. I therefore enjoin the government to rehabilitate the street children; make education free for them as they are living on the street as a result of poverty and neglect.

CAREER GUIDE

DO YOU WANT TO BE A MATHEMATICIAN?

Mathematics is a scientific shorthand describing complex situations concisely and precisely, and it is a tool that can be used to tackle all types of problems. Theoretically, or pure, mathematicians develop mathematical relationships and define new principles that can be applied to a variety of different problems. Applied mathematicians develop theories and techniques, such as mathematical modeling, to solve problems in physics, the life sciences, chemistry, engineering, economics, and management.

THE JOB

Mathematics research can take many forms. Theoretical mathematicians are primarily concerned with pure and abstract mathematical concepts and work in universities. Some mathematicians work for industrial research associations and government research establishments, while others work in the aeronautics, telecommunication, computer, control engineering, or energy industries.

Mathematicians interested in the practical applications of their subject need to widen their knowledge of the underlying science or technology. Those working in industry are expected to be flexible and arrive at a speedy solution to a problem.

Applied mathematicians use mathematical techniques in a variety of ways. For example, they may use functions and graphs to understand oil wells or business accounts; integrating for mixing paints; biological modeling for population dynamics; vibrations for tuning forks; and mathematical programming for cryptography or sending secret messages.

Applied mathematicians may have various job titles and many people using mathematical techniques may not regard themselves primarily as mathematicians. Computer applications engineers use mathematical models and develop computer systems to solve scientific and engineering problems. Researchers may use mathematical modeling to solve management and operational problems .Actuaries use probability theory to asses the degree of risk and calculate life insurance policies.

Many mathematicians combine their mathematical skills with teaching and work in schools, colleges or universities.

Mathematical skills are also important for all areas of financial work and management services. Financial work includes accountancy, actuarial work, taxation, and insurance. Management services include operational research, work study, organization and methods, computing services, and systems. Some of the work requires a range of mathematical skills while others, such as actuaries and statisticians, specialize in a particular branch of mathematics.

Statisticians may work in investment analysis or for a research establishment, the health service, civil service, market research establishment, or pharmaceutical companies.
Mathematicians in industries usually work regular hours. Research mathematicians may work long hours solving problems. Mathematical work can involve long periods of close concentration and eye strain is a possibility.

SKILLS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Accuracy
- Communication skills
- Computer skills
- Concentration
- Critical thinking
- Initiative
- Logic
- Methodical approach
- Numeracy
- Problem solving ability
- Self discipline
- Technical or scientific ability

TRAINING

A bachelor's degree in mathematics is the minimum qualification needed by prospective mathematicians. Typical mathematics degree courses cover analytical geometry, calculus, differential equations, linear algebra, probability theory, and statistics, mathematical analysis, numerical analysis, topology, mathematical logic. Mathematicians should also take courses in computer programming, since most complex mathematical computation and mathematical modeling are performed by computers.

Training in a field that uses or is closely related to mathematics may be important. Applied mathematics is used extensively in physics, chemistry, engineering, actuarial science and operational research. Mathematics is increasingly useful too, in the fields of biological research.

Most Nigerian Universities offer mathematics as a course for students.

PROSPECT/OUTLOOK

Mathematicians are employed by companies, research firms, the civil services, universities, colleges and schools. Job prospect are unlikely to increase substantially, although there should be good opportunity with employers interested in numerate graduates. Applied mathematicians are more likely to be in demand than pure mathematicians. Those with a background in computer science, operational research, or engineering should be in demand. There is a shortage of good mathematics teachers in many countries.

Mathematicians looking for specialized work are likely to have better job prospect with a post graduates qualification. Mathematicians are well placed to move into accountancy, actuarial, banking, insurance, statistical, or computing work.

Reference:

•***"Professional and Technical Careers - A Guide from World Book".***

YOUNG ACHIEVER

Sifon Precious Ediomo-Abasi
(Aiming beyond the stars)

December 19, 2008 will forever remain indelible in the life of Sifon Precious Ediomo- Abasi.It was the day hundreds of young people gathered at the multi-purpose hall of EKO FM Station to witness the acknowledgement and reward of talent and excellence. It was an evening of embracing extra-ordinary success and attainment. Awards were made to secondary school students in Lagos State.One of such awardees was Sifon Ediomo –Abasi. On this day, she bagged the award of the '2008 Best Young Poet in Lagos State', a competition organized by ECHONEWS, a publication of EKO FM Station for Secondary School students. According to Sifon, "Nigerian poets like Promise Okekwe, John P Clark, Niyi Osundare, Wole Soyinka and Ken Saro-Wiwa have motivated me greatly. I simply love poetry", she stressed.

Her background

'Presh' as friends call her was born in March 1992. She is the second child in a family of four. Sifon who has a Medical practitioner as a mother and a Minister of God for a father attended Highgate Nursery and Primary school(1999-2003), Unity Junior High School, both in Oshodi (2003-2006). Presently, she is at the Unity Senior High School, also in Oshodi. Her early years were filled with challenges. At the primary school level, she became asthmatic and was stigmatized with names like, 'Sickler', Agric Fowl' etc by her classmates because of her frequent bouts of sickness. This she said has increased her passion and love for those with sickle cell and asthma. 'It has made me more charismatic in the work I do at the Genotype Foundation Club and has also enabled me to use my writing skills to denounce stigma and other issues that affect young people', she concluded.

Fortunately, she was healed and in order to regain her academic balance, she joined a strong study group in school, made friends with the best students in class and also prayed to God for strength

Her driving force

The amiable 17 year old girl draws her strength from her father, elder sister and her Principal. She says 'My father gets to discuss with me on an intellectual level about so many issues of life, he taught me to build on ideas and never leave an idea under the carpet. My sister helps me to think outside the box and has paved a lot of motivating ways for me to follow. My principal, is always there to encourage me academically', she chipped in. Mr. Fela Durotoye, the author of ***"The 17 Secrets Of A Highflying Student"***, a goal oriented and focused motivational speaker is Sifon's role model. According to her, "his words cut across people of different professions, class and interest and his many leadership qualities endear him to her.

Advice to young people

She advises young people to learn to be well informed so that they can make informed decisions. This can be achieved by reading books, listening to and watching good programs. She encourages young people to increase their unique selling points and thus be the best they can be.

BOOK REVIEW

Title: "***WHAT KIDS NEED TO SUCCEED***"
ISBN: 1-57542-030-9
Number of Pages: 234
Authors: Peter L. Benson, Ph.D., Judy Galbraith, M.A. and Pamela Espeland
Year of Publication: 1998
Reviewer: John Djogbefia (18 years old)

"***WHAT KIDS NEED TO SUCCEED***", is a book for kids. It highlights *developmental* assets including family support, a caring neighborhood, self-esteem, and resistance skills that kids need. Based on groundbreaking nationwide studies, *What Kids Need to Succeed* spells out 40 assets, good things every young person needs in order to succeed.

- More than 900 specific, concrete suggestions help you build assets at home, at school, in the community, and in the congregation.
- Checklists help you identify the assets your kids already have so you can focus on the ones they need.
- Special "Tips for Teens: Build Your Own Assets" sections help young people shape their own success.

This book begins with a series of community surveys across the country, from September, 1989, through March, 1990, students in grades 6 through 12 were given a 152-items inventory called "Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors".

The language used is such that young people can understand and build their own checklist for their growing up. The chapters list the various assets such as support, empowerment, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, social competencies, positive values and also discuss some of the roadblocks to asset building and how to overcome them.

The book also lists some of the developmental deficits to include:

1. Spending two or more hours a day alone at home without an adult.
2. Putting a lot of emphasis on selfish values.
3. Watching more than three hours of T.V a day.
4. Going to parties where friends drink alcohol.
5. Feeling stresses or pressure most or all of the time.

How to overcome these deficits are also proffered to include:

1. Setting boundaries and limits
2. Nurturing a strong commitment to education
3. Providing support and care in all areas of their lives, not just in the family
4. Cultivating positive values and concern for others.

A checklist for kids and teens

Check each statement that is true for you.

- I feel loved and supported in my family.
- I can go to my parents or guardians for advice and support. I have frequent, in-depth conversation with them.
- I know three or more other adults (besides my parents or guardians) that I can go to for advice and support.
- My neighbors encourage and support me.
- My school provides a caring, encouraging environment.
- My parents or guardians help me succeed in school.
- I feel valued by adults in my community.
- I serve in my community one or more hours each week.
- I feel safe at home, at school, and in my neighborhood.
- My family has clear rules and consequences for my behavior, and they monitor my whereabouts.
- My school has clear rules and consequences for behavior.
- I'm optimistic about my future.

Young people need to experience support, care, and love from their families and many others. They need organizations and institutions that provide positive, supportive environments. They also need to be valued by their communities and have opportunities to contribute to others. For this to occur, they must be safe and feel secured. They need to know what is expected of them and whether activities and behaviors are "in bounds" or "out of bounds". The more a child develops positive values that guide his or her behavior, the more likely it is that he or she will make positive choices and grow up healthy.

The book is basically a motivation for young people to work hard and achieve success.

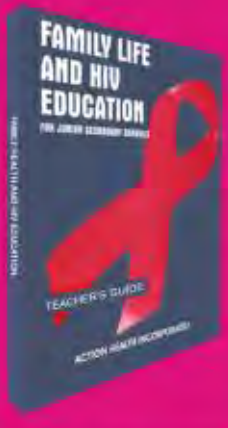
RESOURCES

The materials listed here are resources on adolescent development. These materials are available for use in the reference library at the AHI Youth Centre at 17 Lawal Street, Jibowu, Yaba, Lagos

Books

Family Life and HIV Education for Junior Secondary Schools Students' Handbook by Action Health Incorporated

Family Life and HIV Education Students' Handbook is developed for use by student at the Junior secondary School level as a supplementary text with factual information on the Family Life and HIV Education (FLHE) Curriculum. It is organized around the five key concept in the approved FLHE curriculum to help young people learn about their bodies, physical and emotional changes that occur during adolescence; presenting how young people can acquire skills including steps to take in setting sexual limit and ways of refusing unwanted sexual advances; exposing young people to issues around HIV infection and prevention and encouraging young people to discuss relationships with family and friends, as well as addressing the social and cultural environments that influence the way they learn about and express their sexuality. Where appropriate, the handbook contains stories, illustrations, pictures and cartoon that will help the students understand the topics better.



Family Life and HIV Education for Junior Secondary Schools Teachers' Guide by Action Health Incorporated

Family Life and HIV Education Teachers' Guide is a comprehensive, easy-to-understand guide for use by teachers in junior Secondary Schools who have the responsibility for classroom delivery f the Family Life and HIV Education (FLHE) Curriculum. This publication is not a textbook but rather a "**how to do**" guide for teachers. The guide encourages teachers to be creative, reflective and observant of the reaction and general demeanor of young people during classroom interaction, as well as creating an enabling environment for learning. Each chapter in the guide is divided into the following sections for effective delivery of the FLHE curriculum: lesson objectives, teaching aids, activities and evaluation questions. Teachers are encouraged to supplement with appropriate content-based textbooks, the FLHE curriculum and the Family Life and HIV Education Students' Handbook.

Comprehensive Sexuality Education: Trainers' Resource Manual"
By Action Health Incorporated (AHI)

This manual provides a step-by-step guide to teaching Family Life and HIV/AIDS Education (FLHE). It provides instructional material for teaching topics under the six key concepts of comprehensive sexuality education (i.e. relationships, human development, personal skills, sexual behaviour, sexual heath and sexuality, society and culture). Educators and other sexuality professionals will find this manual a complete resource in teaching young people about sexuality.

"WHAT KIDS NEED TO SUCCEED"
***By Peter* L. Benson, Ph.D., Judy Galbraith, M.A. and Pamela Espeland**

The book is for kids. It highlights *developmental* assets including family support, a caring neighborhood, self-esteem, and resistance skills that kids need. Based on groundbreaking nationwide studies, *What Kids Need to Succeed* spells out 40 assets, good things every young person needs in order to succeed.

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