

**GIRLS' POWER INITIATIVE
(GPI) NIGERIA**

"towards an empowered womanhood"

SEXUALITY EDUCATION SERIES

For

Young Persons

No. 6

**FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN
SEXUALITY EDUCATION**

Editors

Bene Madunagu and Ndodeye Bassey

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Acknowledgement

The topic for this volume of the Sexuality Education Series for young persons originated from the GPI girls who in sharing the lessons they learn at the GPI centres on Human Sexuality, Family Life and HIV/AIDS with their peers bring back questions they are often asked about what Human Sexuality means in their lives. We, therefore, owe the subject of this volume to the GPI girls themselves and to their peers who, through them and their activism, would make it possible for this knowledge to be upscaled through this publication to other youths who need the answers to these questions. This we believe, will help them to grapple with the confusion of growing up experiences. We are grateful to the girls for sharing their experiences and contributing to this publication.

In gathering the questions from the girls and putting them together, Edidiong Paulinus, the Library Assistant in GPI Calabar Centre, enthusiastically_{iv} put the questions together, making it possible and easier for Bene and Ndodeye to use the materials for the content of this volume. Our thanks go to Edidiong for her patience in typing and retyping the original text and all the corrected versions. Also, GPI facilitators, through the various innovative facilitating skills they use in getting girls during the lessons to share, interact, raise questions and participate fully, contributed the basic materials and provoked the title and content of this volume. We are grateful to them for their keen and committed engagement with the girls.

Bene and Ndodeye used the materials generated by the girls and the facilitators to put the publication together in our own non-professional way. The final outcome in the printable form was due to the usual selfless contribution by Edwin Madunagu (my friend, comrade and partner) through his questions, constructive criticisms and reading through with his journalistic eyes and helping us amend the content to arrive at the way it is presented here. We owe him our deep appreciation.

Of course, we would have mobilized all these supportive forces to arrive at the final manuscript which would have remained perhaps among GPI staff in limited use for lessons, if we did not receive support from our relentless supporters; namely the International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC), the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), the MacArthur Foundation, the Ford Foundation and Empower who, by providing the resources, make it possible for us to provide the weekly lessons for the girls, ensure learning exposure to equip facilitators with the skills to help girls express their needs and give them the voice to speak for themselves and their peers. This has also translated into the provision of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials, such as this one which have become basic sources for their information to share with peers. We thank them all for their continuous trust, belief and support for the work we do in GPI.

Our thanks also go to our support staff and Board members for their expert advice, supervision, monitoring and for ensuring that we remain on course in executing the outcomes of our strategic planning towards meeting out set goals.

Bene E. Madunagu March, 2009

HUMAN SEXUALITY EDUCATION: WHAT, WHY AND HOW?

Daddy, Mummy what is this on me? Do not worry it will soon be over, was the response Menyene got from his parents when he woke up one day and found that his pajamas, laps and bed were soiled with something slippery and pap-like.

Menyene woke up one day and felt wetness, thinking he has urinated on the bed (bed wetting) which he was not sure because the habit was not part of him. Surprised, Menyene used his hands to feel his clothes, the bedsheet, etc. He discovered that the texture of what he felt was not liquid-like. Confused, he called to his parents who rushed to his room. He asked his parents what the wetness was all about as he never peed at night before. The parents turned and looked at each other, then his father cleared his throat and responded, "it is natural and will soon be over." This was because they were not comfortable discussing this issue with their son because they thought he was still too young at 13 to know what that was.

The question now is, why this kind of silence around issues of human development or human sexuality? This is something natural and we cannot run away from it. Why is it that parents/ adults see it as a taboo to talk about human sexuality - life -

reality? The essence of this series is to discuss, why the discomforts, how has this affected our children and how will this affect those yet to be born and finally, what can, or should be done. We need to talk about the why, the how and the what.

Communication between parents and adolescents on any issue is very vital. Everyone needs to know why there are such changes as human beings develop from infancy through adolescence to adulthood; how people go through such developmental stages; what happens to each stage of human development and how to cope/what to do or not do. Such natural process must not be a taboo as information on these issues is necessary for them to take the right decisions. "Knowledge is power", as the saying goes.

Naturally, every human being is a sexual being. Why then is the mention of the word, sexuality often treated with passionate disapproval? Experience has shown that people equate the term, sexuality with the act of sexual intercourse. This is not entirely correct. Human sexuality is the total behaviour of human beings from birth to death. Young people ask questions to know why they menstruate, experience wet dreams, how they came into the world, what to do when they menstruate, what ejaculation is, at what age can boys ejaculate, when do girls start menstruating, what should I do about the pimples on my face?, etc etc. Giving them accurate answers will save

them from preventable errors that could bring serious consequences. Silence over discussing them carry similar negative consequences.

Many people are still of the opinion that allowing young people access to sexuality education encourages “early sexual experimentation.” By this assumption, several studies have been conducted to determine whether sexuality education programmes actually promote young people’s early sexual involvement.

The result of such studies has shown that there is no significant relationship between the process of receiving formal sexuality education and initiating early sexual activities, or “indulging in sexual activities.”

Every adult and even adolescents themselves will agree that the period of adolescence is usually a very traumatic and turbulent one and young people go through it with a lot of challenges. They are often faced with diverse sexual and reproductive rights/health challenges. Most young people today learn about issues relating to their development from their peers and the media and this information is often confusing, inaccurate and misleading. Here is one of such cases:

Esther and her twin brother, Donald were 15 years old and in Junior Secondary School (JSS) 3. They decided to tell their

parents about a reading group in their school which included males and females; what they got was not what they expected as they were scolded and labelled corrupt children. According to their parents, it is ungodly for young males and females to be together alone. As a result of this they changed the school their children attended from a co-educational system of school to single sex schools. In Esther's new school, a lesson on menstruation was treated, when she returned home, she decided to ask her mother why she has not menstruated at 15 because she had heard from her teacher that some girls menstruate at 13 years. Her mother felt very embarrassed that her daughter should be asking such questions. How can her daughter talk about menstruation! See how corrupt children these days can be! Her mother's response again made her even more confused. She felt unhappy as she was again called a corrupt girl and made to feel that the word 'menstruation' is a taboo or some evil word.

Eventually Esther started menstruating, but rather confided in her friends who told her to use tissue paper to absorb the flow; telling her that she was now a big girl. Now, if her parents had educated her about such a natural process in adolescent girls, she would have known that she should not use tissue paper but either sanitary pad or very clean cotton piece of cloth.

A male teacher in her school who intimidates students, threatening to fail them if they don't have sexual intercourse

with him, started to pester her for sex. Again, she confided in her friends who advised her to accept, if she did not want to repeat the class. She ignorantly accepted the teacher's demands. After several abuses from the teacher, Esther became pregnant; she informed the teacher. The teacher took her to where an unsafe abortion was performed, resulting in complications. It was at this stage that her parents knew what was going on.

Though she did not die, she lived a miserable life as the whole school got to hear what happened, and Esther could no longer continue schooling there. She dropped out of school. This could have been avoided. She should have been informed that at puberty, she would start to ovulate every month and if she had unprotected sexual intercourse, she could become pregnant, or even contract STIs or HIV/AIDS. She should also have been told of the risk of unsafe abortion.

What lesson can we learn from the above story? Could her parents have prevented this abuse and unfortunate incident by using the teachable moment when Esther asked to know about menstruation? Why do some parents/guardians feel uncomfortable talking about issues of sexuality, how do our values affect us? Do we need to have a rethink about what we hold as our values? Do parents/adults want to continue this trend of exposing our young girls to avoidable abuse and its attendant consequences by refusing to let them understand human sexuality? Would any sane person deliberately put

her/his fingers into fire if the person knows she/he could have the fingers burnt?

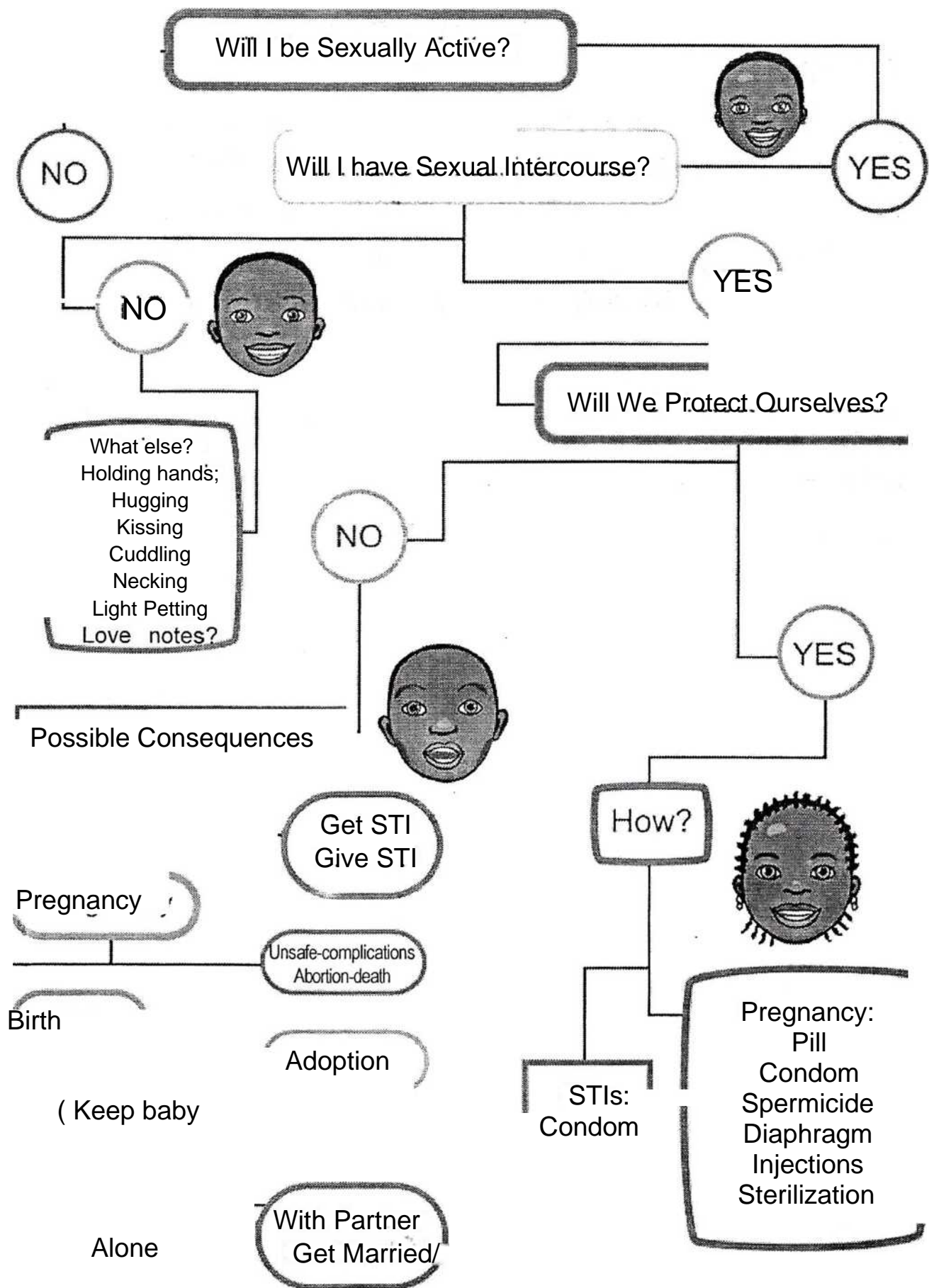
Young people need comprehensive sexuality education that model and teach positive self-worth, responsibility, understanding and acceptance of diversity and sexual health; among other issues of human development

Young people should be assisted through accurate information to develop and build a positive sense of their own sexuality by creating safe space and opportunities for them to consider all aspects of human sexuality; to ask questions and to understand the need to act positively and think about their future, their relationships, with family, friends, etc and their role/contribution to their community.

The value of sexuality education for young people

Comprehensive sexuality education is a planned process of education that fosters the acquisition of accurate information, the formation of positive attitudes, beliefs and values, as well as the development of skills to cope with the biological, psychological, socio-cultural and spiritual aspects of human sexuality.

Let us take a look at an example of every day challenge in the life of most young people today - decision -making surrounding being sexually active or not:



Learning about sexuality is a lifelong process and an essential part of every person's socialization from infancy to death. Messages about sexuality are communicated directly or indirectly through exposure to a wide variety of influences. Sources and places of sexual learning include parents and other relatives, close friends and peer groups, schools, the mass media, religious institutions, workplaces and other gathering places, health care service providers, social institutions, and the arts. Sexuality education, thus, is something that happens whether or not we undertake it consciously and formally. But since all these are learned indirectly as virtually no one wants to consciously talk about them comfortably, they are often misconstrued leading to serious negative consequences.

Why the discomforts in communicating sexuality with young people?

Why is it that most parents, educators and communities all face the challenge of creating a comfortable environment that would support and nurture good sexual health for young people? Why is it that most adults tend to only provide adolescents with health risks and potential negative messages and consequences associated with sexual activity? Yet others will prefer not to mention the issue of sexuality at all. Our socialization process and the culture of silence on sexuality issues make people think that they are not sexual until they are lured, coerced or forced into engaging in sexual activities, often times out of ignorance!

Some values that we internalize as we grow up from our religious circles, parents, family, media, etc affect our ability to communicate sexuality issues because these values define what we see as a taboo, sinful, etc. even without our analyzing situations or having a rethink about what we are told. The reality of human life is that human beings are sexual throughout their lifetime - babies, children, adolescents, adults young and old people enjoy their sexuality. Although sexuality extends across the life cycle, the way it is experienced changes throughout life span as a person grows, develops and matures. The changes we pass through from age zero consist of physical, emotional, physiological and sexual examples. Babies enjoy touching, petting, cuddling and stroking. When babies cry and are picked up, cuddled, stroked, etc., they stop crying and may even sleep off. This is a normal, natural expression

of human sexuality. When we begin to look at the issue of sexuality from this point of nature we will not find it uncomfortable discussing sexuality.

Our sources of sexual learning influence our ability to talk comfortably about sexuality issues. For example, our media, print and electronic show us compromising postures on bill boards and magazines with no accompanying skills on how to interpret and pass on positive lessons and messages on such revealing scenes. So, as adults most people have little or no skills on how to help young people process information. Hence, most adults and parents keep silent on issues of sexuality or only pass on negative messages.

An exercise to help you begin to develop or increase your comfort level

Word puzzle

The word puzzle consists of words that are natural to male and female. It is important to be comfortable and to know them. They all have to do with our lives and our healthy development.

Try crossing these words and say them as you do so

1. Menstruation
2. Breast
3. Penis
4. Vulva
5. Sanitary pad
6. Wet dream
7. Sexual intercourse
8. Pregnancy
9. Ovulation
10. Scrotum
11. Masturbation
12. Ejaculation
13. Menarche

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

Clarifying your values and developing positive attitudes

There are a lot of ways people, including young people, communicate, but adults disappoint them by failure to respond. Rather, adolescents who ask questions about issues of human sexuality get discouraged or intimidated by verbal and non-verbal attack and threats such as being called names or labelled, being interrupted, criticized, being made to feel guilty or being judged, frowning, walking out on the person, etc. as a result of our beliefs or values that we regard as worthwhile.

We exhibit such behaviours when young people try to communicate issues of sexuality or their challenges on reproductive health with adults. Young people need to know and should be provided with accurate information rather than being driven to seek wrong information and get misled at the risk of their health and lives. Not doing this would:

- » Hinder young people from conveying their needs, opinions and feelings
- » Make them feel misunderstood; not trusted and their opinions not being respected.
- » Make young people resort to seeking advice from friends and, therefore, taking wrong, uninformed and unhealthy decisions, with serious negative consequences.

Values are things we hold strongly, firmly and religiously to. Everyone is entitled to values - things we hold dear, important.

However, how much do you understand about the values you pick up without questioning? Have you tried to clarify such things based on your own principles or understanding?

Values clarification is an approach to help individuals recognize their own values and affirm them publicly (ability to take a position or, the value and defend it). Being clear about our own values and beliefs helps us to make decisions that feel principled and right to us. Many times the values we hold simply reflect different people's ideas or preferences and so may not have the desired positive effect. If values allow persons to hurt themselves, others or the world, then we need to examine these. We need to really stop and look at whether our values are what we want to be to make our lives and the world around us a positive place to live or not.

Values clarification also assists us to be clear about our values on sexuality related issues, learn to support and defend their positions on issues under the debate and learn to listen to, and consider opposing points of view.

Begin to see sexuality as not starting during adolescence or adulthood but with childhood sexual curiosity. During adolescence there is just a sudden upsurge of curiosity and interest in one's own body and the bodies of one's peers. Even very young adolescents are interested in "how things work". This is why they may ask questions such as "Mummy how did I come to the world", why is it that Daddy has hairs on his face and you don't have?

We need to be comfortable to give age appropriate information to enable them to grow up healthy and trusting the adults around them. Problems usually arise during adolescence from lack of accurate nonjudgemental information. More confusion and difficulties from wrong or no information tend to make them unable to build decision making or refusal skills. It is essential for one to build and understand sexuality during the teenage period to be familiar with ways to deal with teenagers' questions, feelings and challenges.

Advantages of learning to be comfortable in discussing sexuality with young people

- It increases communication with parents and other adults about sexual matters

- It breeds a sense of responsibility

- It helps the individuals to appreciate her/his body parts

- It breeds respect for people's choices and preferences

- It promotes self-esteem and self-regard

- It increases decision making skills about sexuality and life

- It promotes abstinence and subsequent reduction in contracting STIs, including HIV/AIDS

- It encourages outspokenness, especially when one has a bodily problem/ challenge

- It encourages mutual respect

- It removes embarrassment

- It demystifies sex and sexually related issues

- It removes ignorance
- It brings enlightenment and knowledge
- It promotes freedom of speech without necessarily promoting vulgarism of language
- . It delays the onset of sexual activities
- It makes one comfortable with sexuality issues
- It encourages fair relationship
- It helps one to know when to say, “ stop it,” or “no sir” or “ no ma” or “not now”
- It increases tolerance towards the behaviour and personal values of others

Here are some views from young people who have benefited from sexuality education discussion

3. Two girls, (Esther, aged 20, and Magdalene, 19) confessed to changing their attitudes of always expecting gifts from people on St. Valentine’s Day due to knowledge gained in the lesson on tips on St. Valentine’s Day celebration. Esther puts it thus “I was made to realize that I must not expect gifts from people all the time and that I can also give things as well, so on St. Valentine’s Day, I did not expect any gift, rather I tried to give some of my loved ones something.”

Ability to make informed decisions on their sexuality/behaviour/practice

1. Glory (18 years) took a decision to go for an HIV test to know her status as a result of information she got from GPI on STIs/HIV/AIDS. She said thus, “I am really happy that I went

for the test which showed that I am negative. Before now, I was always scared of what the result will be which was actually what made me to delay going for the test, but after the lesson on STIs/HIV/AIDS, I made up my mind to go and I did.”

2. Grace (19 years) was able to resist pressure from a woman to become her lesbian partner. According to her, “I told the woman that I was not interested and each time she brought it up, I just kept on telling her “no” because deep within me, I do not have such feelings or attraction as a lesbian. She finally let me be when she realized I was serious and won’t change my mind.”

3. Rosemary (17 years) during her experience-sharing on how she spent the yuletide season, revealed how she overcame being sexually exploited by a man in her aunt’s compound. According to her, “There is this man in my aunt’s compound with a little daughter, who is separated from his wife. He said he loved me and would like to marry me. One day, he came to me and asked that I come to his room to collect some money so that I will allow him have ‘fun’ with me. Through GPI’s information, I tried to make him see his folly by using his daughter as a case study of a girl who can be sexually exploited by a man for money. I watched keenly for his expression as he moved immediately in defence of his daughter by stating “I will kill the man who tries that with my daughter”. I simply told him afterwards ‘That is the same thing I will do to you’. He was amazed and since then, he stopped pestering me”.

Ability to apply information on self and others

1. Eyoanwan (15 years) who ordinarily is very shy explained how the lesson on public speaking skills helped her in school. According to her, "... when I was asked by my class teacher to take a topic during a practical class, I was happy that I did well to score the highest. This was due to GPI's information on public speaking skills and I even facilitated the lesson, instead of teaching."
2. Charity (14 years) was able to use the GPI information to stop her parents from circumcising her. According to her "**after** the lesson on FGM and a talk I had with my facilitator, I went back home and told my mother and father about the consequences. I even showed them my *notes* from GPI on the topic, and my Dad agreed with me immediately, but it took me some time to convince my mother but she finally accepted."
3. Joycelyn (13 years) showed assertiveness in handling a situation where she was falsely accused and reported to her father by her school teacher, because of the rumour that Joycelyn was not attending classes, but would hang around with boys during school hours. This was because Joycelyn was seen associating freely with boys and being too social. For this reason, her father stopped her from attending GPI lessons and extra lessons in school. Joycelyn, however took her GPI notebook to plead with her father to allow her continue with GPI lessons. She **showed her father the** different topics treated in GPI and

how useful those topics were to her. With that, her father allowed her to continue with GPI lessons but adamantly refused for her to continue the lessons in school.

4. Precious (14 years) recalled how the lesson on body image helped her. “My friends have always taunted me because of my size, because I am a very slim person.” “Before I joined GPI, I used to cry my eyes out. My friends called me all sorts of names from ‘tiny’ to ‘broomstick’, making me to feel so inferior, but the information in GPI on body image made me realize that I am a unique being. I learnt how to be happy with myself and as a result. I carried myself so high and began to tell my friends how unique and happy I am with the way my body is. These days, my friends respect me very well because I have talents, skills and knowledge which they don’t have”.
6. Alma (13 years) also recalled how she cautioned boys in her class who were fond of sexually harassing girls by touching their bottoms, breasts and vulva. She threatened to report them to the school authority. This made them stop the act. She again was able to counsel her classmate who was not serious with her exams because she was distracted by the attentions of a male student who was harassing her for a sexual relationship. Her friend listened to her and cut off the relationship with the male student, and her school performance improved.

7. Blessing (17 years.) supported and encouraged a young woman on steps that could be taken to secure the custody of her child while also receiving the estranged partner's support for the upbringing of the child. Blessing referred the warring parties to the Child Rights section of the Ministry of Women Affairs, assuring them that the issue would be resolved if taken there. It worked.
8. Nkoyo (19 years) gave correct information on ovulation and menstruation to another girl who was experiencing discomfort from ovulation, but had no knowledge of what it was. Nkoyo was able to ask questions like, 'when was your last period? Do you often have these pains?; weekly or monthly?; after experiencing these pains, how many days would pass before your next menses'? These critical questions helped her understand the girl's predicament and to give the right information accordingly.

Increase in consciousness on the violation of women's rights

As a result of comfortably discussing sexuality issues with adolescent girls at the GPI Calabar Centre, their consciousness on girls/women's rights has increased to a large extent as evident in their sharing of the following experiences on violence and abuse of girls and women.

1. A girl said that she read in the *Sun* newspaper that a 30- year- old man raped 3 sisters aged 2, 4 and 6 years. She explained that before then, the man had been very kind to the children, buying them things everyday so that the family of the 3 children would never suspect him of such act. She then advised that men should not be trusted around children and the need for parents to be observant with their children.
2. Kate (19 years) too, said of how she cautioned her cousin who was fond of battering his girlfriend whenever they had any problem. She made him understand that he had no right to beat up the girl and that dialogue and communication were the best way to resolve any conflict and not violence.
3. Mary (17 years) for her experience, told of how a girl she wrote an examination with was arrested by the police for examination malpractice and when she was unable to pay the N30,000 demanded by the police, the policemen took turns to rape her and afterwards, her parents still paid

N10,000 for her to be released. Mary showed anger against the police recognizing the act as violence against women. She was concerned about what could be done to help a girl in such a situation. Other girls analyzed the situation, pointing out how law enforcement officers who are expected to abide by the law are the very ones to perpetuate evil. The facilitator had given the girls general information on tips to prevent rape and what to do if raped and thereafter, the girls resolved as peer educators to educate other girls on issues of violence against girls and women.

APPENDIXES

(i)

Glossary

Adolescence: the period of growing up from childhood to adulthood, i.e. the period between childhood and adulthood.

Communication: the act of transmitting or receiving information.

Co-education: a system of school where males and females attend together.

Values: beliefs or principles that we regard as worthwhile **Sexuality:** the total behaviour of an individual from birth to death.

Menstruation: the monthly shedding of the walls/lining of the uterus/womb through the vagina of a sexually mature and nonpregnant female .

Wet dreams: ejaculation of semen unconsciously or involuntarily by an adolescent male while asleep.

Pregnancy: the condition of being pregnant.

Taboo: a system of designating persons or things or ideas and beliefs that are kept sacred and prohibited.

Sexual harassment: un-welcomed sexual advances like touching, cat calls, teasing, etc.

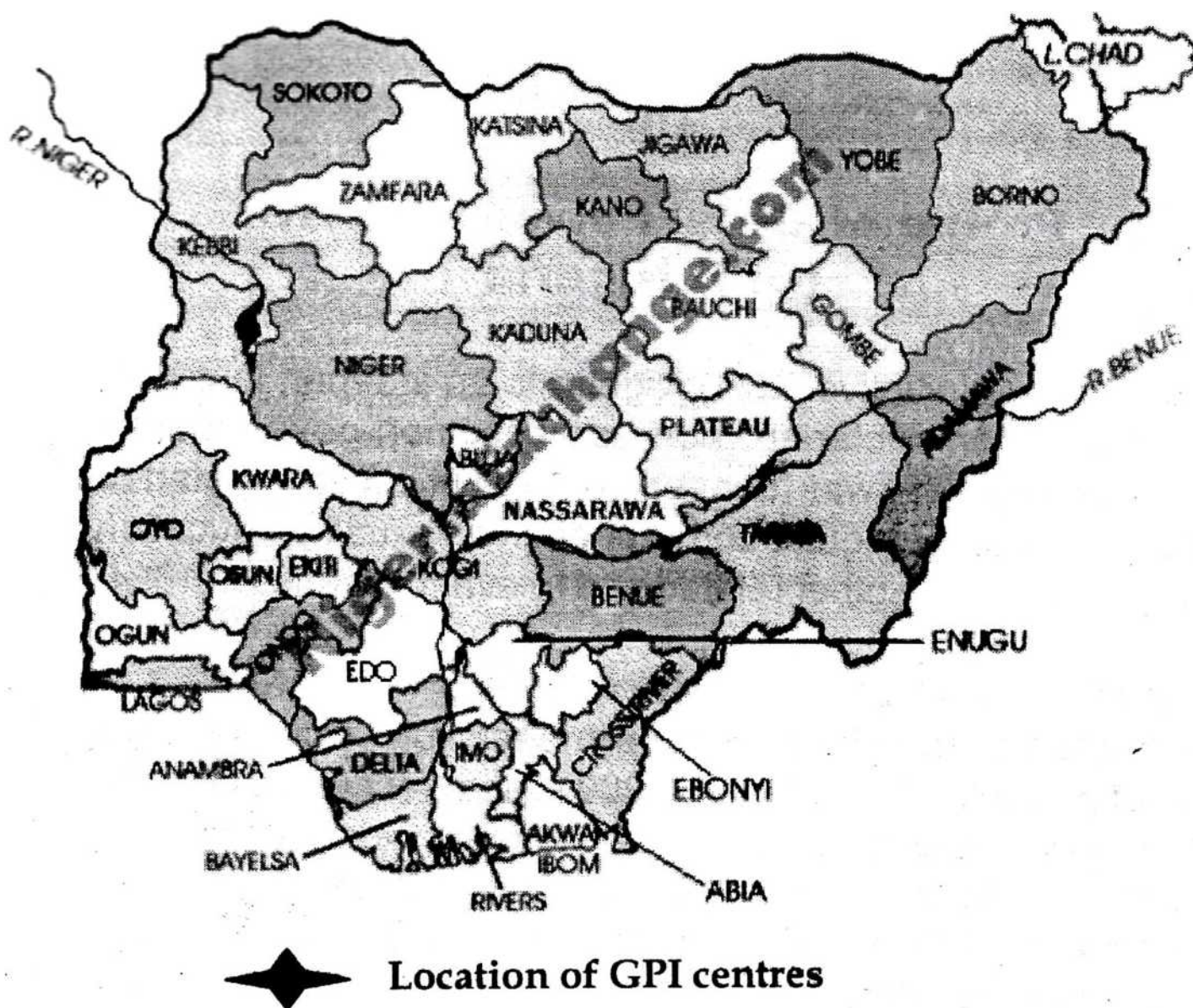
(ii)

Profile of Girls' Power Initiative (GPI) Nigeria

Girls' Power Initiative (GPI) Nigeria is an independent, not-for-profit, non-sectarian, non-partisan, non-governmental organization. GPI was founded in 1993 but effectively started the execution of regular comprehensive sexuality education programmes and other related and relevant activities in 1994.

Location/centres:

GPI first started with two centres in Benin-City, Edo State and Calabar, Cross River State. By 2001 fiscal year GPI increased its physical locations or centres to four, with the two new centres in Asaba, Delta State and Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. The National Secretariat/Headquarters of GPI is in Calabar in Cross River State.



GPI is a registered organisation (Corporate Affairs Commission No. 10290,1997).

GPI was awarded a Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) in 2001. The organization focuses on the education, leadership and other gender-sensitive life management skills and information on human sexuality,

Family Life/HIV/AIDS Education (SFLHE), sexual health and rights, reproductive health and rights, particularly of adolescent girls, aged 10-18 years in Nigeria.

GPI's focus is to assist young girls to live healthy lives and achieve their full potentials, towards an empowered womanhood. It also includes assisting young girls to overcome the risks of early sexual activity, adolescence, unwanted or unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS, unsafe abortions, all forms of sexual abuse and harassment as well as other forms of gender-based violence and exploitation.

GPI vigorously promotes gender equality and equity and works with adolescent girls to develop their leadership and capacity to respond to, and work for social transformation towards gender and social justice.

GPI's VISION

- To be a leading sustainable feminist institution with critical consciousness and capacity for analysis on social and gender prejudices, committed to empowering girls into healthy, self-reliant and productive women for the achievement of positive changes and transformation of patriarchal values in Nigeria.

GPI's MISSION

To empower adolescent girls for social action

through sexuality, human rights, life management and leadership skills training from a gender perspective.

OVERALL OBJECTIVES OF GPI

- To increase leadership and life management skills through providing a forum and safe space for girls to exchange ideas, seek solutions to their problems and receive support to develop.
- To increase the awareness of adolescents, parents guardians, teachers, media persons and the public on the issues of sexuality, gender and human rights of girls and women.
- To reduce the social, cultural and religious practices myths, patriarchal values and norms that violate the rights of the girl-child.
- To increase the capacity of adolescent girls to overcome the challenges of growing up female in Nigeria and become catalysts for social change
- To increase the institutional capacity of GPI as a prime resource for the promotion of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) for adolescent girls from a gender perspective in Nigeria.
- To increase policy advocacy capacity of stakeholders to advance the sexuality, Human Rights and Sexual Health of adolescent girls in Nigeria

GPI STRATEGIES

GPI programme strategies and activities are directed at the 4 spheres of influence on girls thus:

- i. **INDIVIDUAL LEVEL:** of the girls to empower them as social change agents through increasing their self- esteem, knowledge, skills and self-efficiency.
- ii. **SOCIAL NETWORK LEVEL:** At the level of their parents, other family members, and peers to strengthen positive relationships among girls and immediate social relations to provide the necessary support for their actions.
- iii. **COMMUNITY LEVEL:** This is aimed at creating new and broader enabling environment and opportunities for girls' action in challenging patriarchal values and discriminatory practices and beliefs that put girls at risk, and to create awareness about the dynamism of culture to facilitate positive social changes towards gender justice.
- iv. **INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL:** This is focused on social changes through activities and advocacy for policy changes that impact systemic practices and norms that affect girls and their communities.

The following strategies are used to achieve the stated objectives:

1. Education and Capacity-Building
 - (a) Education for girls
 - (b) Public education
 - (c) Capacity-building for alumnae and staff as well as internship programme for young women located in similar organizations in Nigeria and other parts of Africa
2. Advocacy and policy
3. Networking, coalition, collaboration
4. Gender Training Institute
5. Services (counselling/referral and library services)
6. Research and documentation
7. Organizational institutionalization.
8. Educational/skills building sessions with media practitioners.

GPI ACTIVITIES

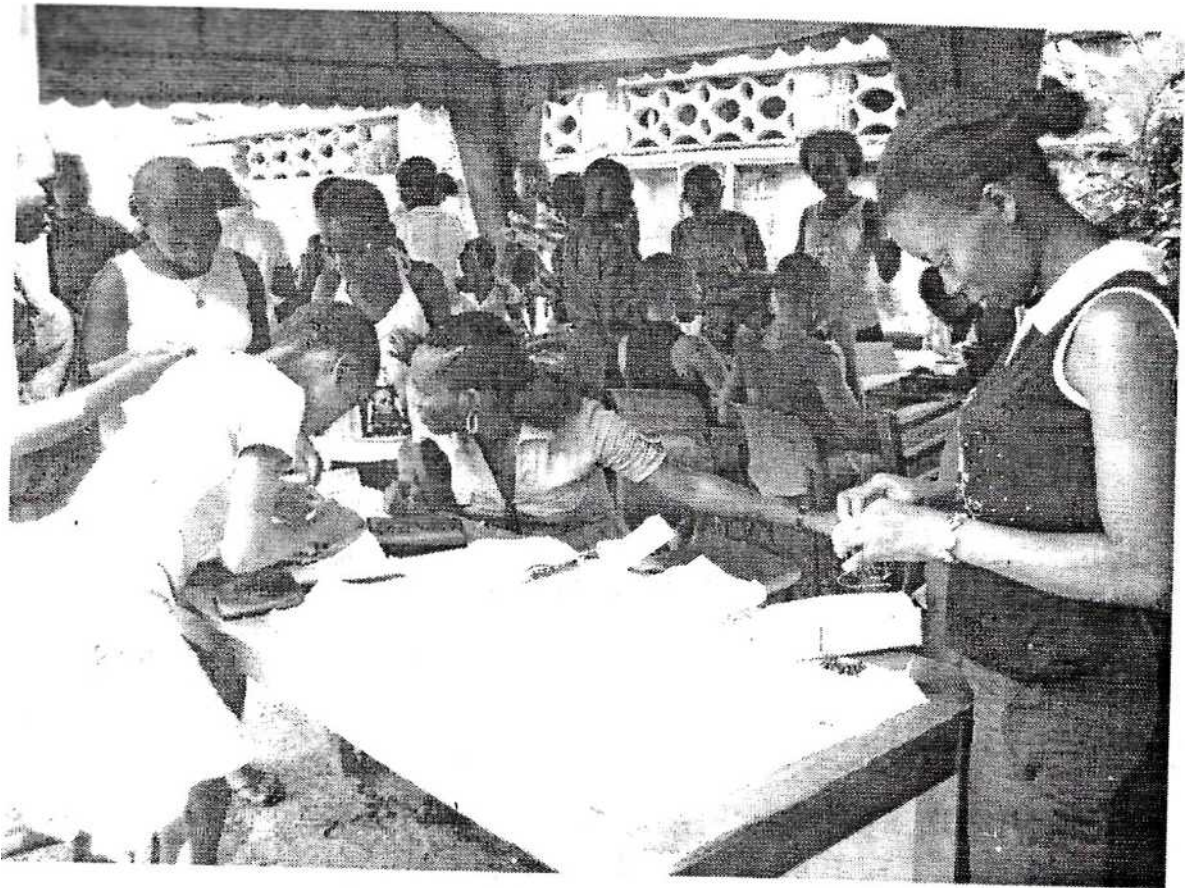
- Weekly lessons
- Schools outreach programme
- Counselling/referrals/home visits
- Library services
- Disseminating of information through: Media programmes
Production of IEC materials Quarterly Newsletter Internship programmes Workshops/trainings Capacity-building

Youth talent festivals

Awareness/sensitization workshops Community
intervention/social work Economic skills training Life
management skills development

Networking and collaborating with other NGOs

Research and documentation.



GPI girls during training on card-making



Group picture of some GPI girls, Coordinator, some GPI staff and students after a quiz competition to mark June 16, Day of the African Child



GPI graduating girls during graduation ceremony



GPI girls during training on beading



A session during GPI holiday programme for GPI outreach schools



Community video watch



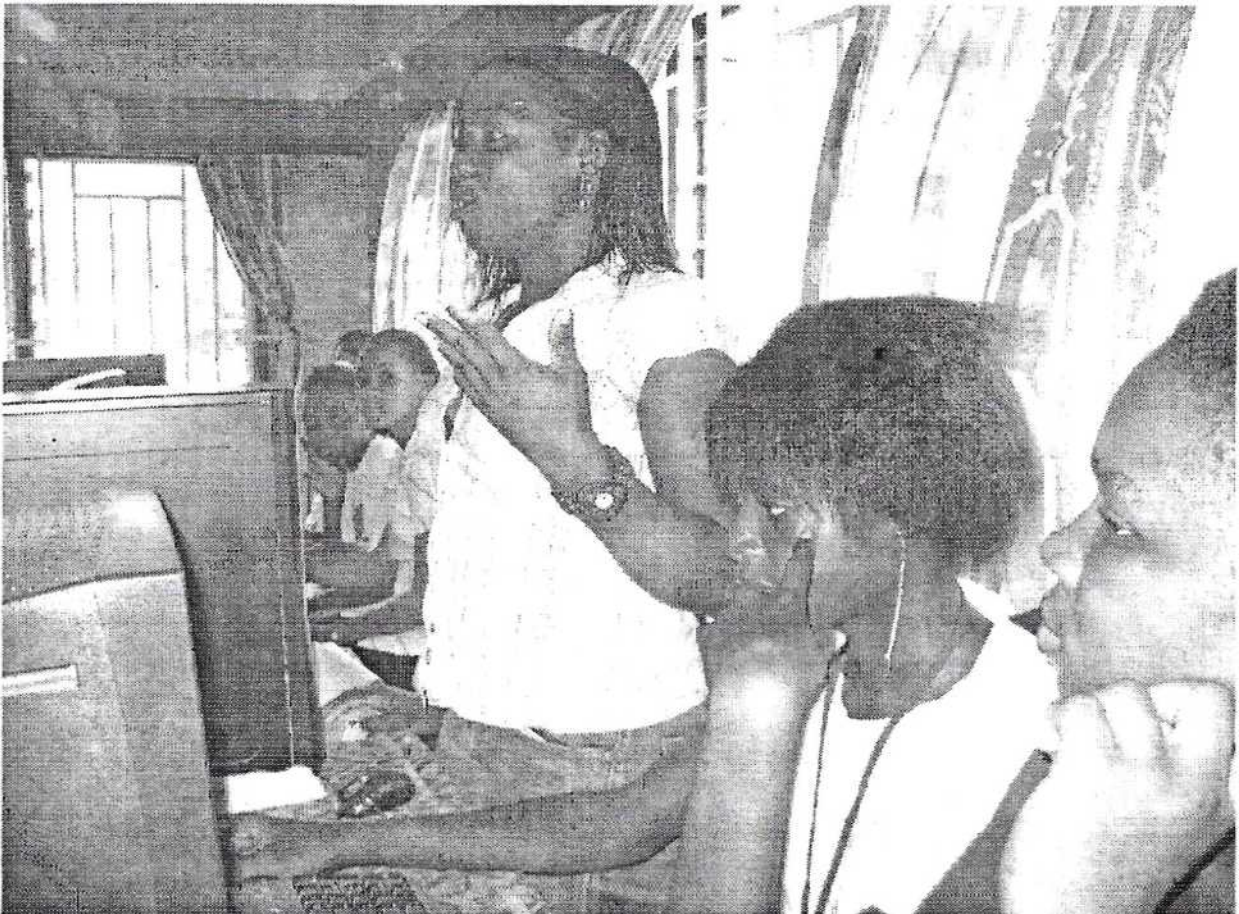
Some community members with GPI team during social work by GPI girls



Group picture of teachers and Coordinator of GPI Calabar Centre, (Prof Bene Madunagu) during training of teachers on SFLHE

BOARD MEMBERS

- Ogoh Alubo - Chair
- Eka Braide
- Ayo Atsenuwa
- Dora Ihaza
- Bene Madunagu
- Grace Osakue - Secretary



GPI girls using the E-FLHE in learning

(iii)

Some Important accomplishments of GPI

- International award won for excellence and innovation in Sexuality Education (2007), by The World Association for Sexual Health, (WAS).
- Organized a national training in collaboration with IWHC in August (14 - 18) 2007 to increase the capacity of youths across Nigeria on feminist activism.
- 14 years of positive development and institutionalization of GPI.
- Succeeded in collaborating with the Cross River State Ministry of Education to train school teachers for the implementation of the SFLHE curriculum and to provide technical support through the training of school teachers, including those selected by the state to be trained as Master Trainers for the implementation of the National Sexuality Family Life and HIV/AIDS Education curriculum as well as in providing resource materials for the teachers/schools to implement and sustain the programme.
- Successfully graduated 12 sets of adolescent female beneficiaries in Cross River and Edo State centres and 1 set in Akwa Ibom and Delta centres, having grown from the initial group of 15 girls in July 1994 to an organization that today reaches out to approximately 50,000 adolescent girls directly and indirectly, particularly in the Niger Delta zone of Nigeria, through 37

centre-based lessons, school holiday programmes, radio and television programmes and regular quarterly newsletter, among other strategies used to reach out to adolescents.

Developed 5 volumes of sexuality education series for young people in addition to the 3 volumes of revised edition of GPI training manual to meet the age-specific needs and experiences of adolescents, aged between 10 and 18 years.

Selected as a member of the Cross River State working group on HIV/AIDS in 2006, by Cross River State Action Committee on HIV/AIDS (SACA)

Selected as a member of Edo State Action Committee on HIV and AIDS in 2007.

Selected by Cross River State SACA to be part of the exercise to take inventory and the mapping of HIV/ AIDS service delivery points: CSOs, support groups and PLWAs as well as high risks locations for policy decision on HIV/AIDS in the state.

Selected as a member of the National Adolescent Health and Development Working Group (NAHDWG) to review the Nigerian National Adolescent Health Policy in 2006.

Selected by Ford Foundation, East Africa, to train 11 Ford grantees from Kenya and Tanzania in 2006 as well as supporting the period of internship of 7 of the young women.

State recognition of and award to the Coordinator, Prof Bene E. Madunagu, on the 45th Anniversary of the

Nigerian independent celebration, October 1st, 2005 by Cross River State government as an “Erudite Scholar and Advocate of gender and girl-child rights”.

Increased programme strategies and activities beyond the adolescent girls to reach their social networks - parents, teachers, peers, health service providers to provide support and enabling environment for social action and behavioural changes of the girls and demands by parents for registration of their wards in GPI programme.

Maintained the regular quarterly newsletter which has become so popular that institutions and individuals demand for it; e.g. the Cross River State National Library requested for more copies of the *GPI* newsletter as per the statement, “Since our numerous readers are aware of the availability of your publication existing in our branch, we humbly request you to increase the number of copies to twelve (12).”

(iv)

Research and Publications

- Culture and adolescents concerns on sexuality -1996
- Understanding and knowing your body - 1996
- Myths and facts about contraceptives, drugs and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS - 1998
- Questions adolescents ask about their sexuality and answers -1998
- Assertiveness, Vol. 1 - 1999
- Self-Identity, Vol. 2 -1999
- Body Image, Vol. 3 - 1999
- Violence against girls-1999,
- GPI Training Manual - 1999
- GPI at Five-1999
- ABC of relationships - 1999
- Adolescents and sexual health problems - 2000
- Assessing the impact of GPI lessons on adolescents girls — 2000
- Life management for adolescents -2000
- Beijing + 5: Assessing the health and rights of women: General issues, adolescent reproductive health and rights, violence against girls and women

