SEXUALITY EDUCATION SERIES

For

Young Persons

No. 7

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE MEDIA

What Parents and Guardians Need To Know

Editor

Bene Madunagu

GIRLS' POWER INITIATIVE (GPI) NIGERIA

" towards an empowered womanhood"

Sexuality Education Series

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Adolescents are increasingly utilizing cell phones to send sexually suggestive messages. "SEXTING" is fun for them. They have coined their vocabulary, "SEXTING" which is a combination of "sex" and "texting". Most often this is done using nude or seminude pictures in text messages.

In addition to these sexy images, they are also using suggestive messages being sent through text, facebook, etc. Of course, these are impulsive, exciting, youthful ways of "belonging" and excitement. It is obviously based on trust, but could it not have negative consequences that may not be so easy to deal with? What control do you have over what you have sent out to that one "trusted" friend? You assume it will be for "him" or "her" alone?

You could be wrong.

In talking with some secondary school boys in ten randomly selected outreach schools that we work in, 12 out of 20 boys admitted being shown such images by their other peers to whom the images were sent. Sixteen boys admitted that they have forwarded the same to other friends.

It means other friends could also see them. Enemies could also see them. Parents and siblings could also see them. Future/ potential employers could also see them.

Remember always that once you have committed anything to photo, writing, printing, etc, it may be difficult to erase such, and it could be costly. Exciting acts of today may ruin you tomorrow. The cost may no longer be fun. Beyond "sexting", this volume gives useful information and guidance to young people and their parents/guardians on other broadcast media, the internet and the print media.

Bene Madunagu

Acknowledgement

Girls' Power Initiative (GPI), Nigeria holds 3-hour weekly interactive/participatory lessons with adolescent girls, aged 10- 18 years, on topics of adolescent sexuality, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Education.

Girls are provided space, privacy and confidentiality to share their experiences freely.

Through these experiences, girls speak out and discuss freely. It is the lessons from the free/open discussion by the girls that provided the choices of the topic for this edition of the Sexuality Education Series for Young Persons, No. 7 in the series. We learned a lot of alarming things from how the various forms of media have influenced them, their peers, sisters, brothers and friends.

I owe deep gratitude to these young vibrant, courageous and brilliant new generation of feminists in the making. Their generous sharing inspired us to choose this topic.

Ndodeye Bassey then provided the introduction to how we deal with this topic and led the coordination of the data collection for the materialization of this product. Thank you Ndodeye for your contribution and supervision to get the other participants - Unyime, Unoma and Emelia to provide their contributions to meet our target. Unyime Akpan had the task of sourcing , collecting, providing the required materials for the section dealing with the broadcasting media: Radio, Television, Mobile phones and body language. Unyime, you did a great job. Thank you.

Unoma Madunagu took on the challenge of providing the content for the section on Young People and the Internet. Unoma thanks for all your hard work and insight into what this modern high technology of communication means to all of us and its various ramifications, positive and negative for young people. I must confess that I learned a lot from the volume of materials you

provided for your chapter. You provided very useful insights for parents, guardians and teachers in their role to provide necessary guidance for their wards. Thank you.

Emelia Eyo had the onerous task of wading through various print media and skilfully sorted out the important information and lessons for the section on the print media. She ended up with "a-food-for-thought" poem. Thank you for your input, Emelia. Of course, all the facilitators in GPI Calabar Centre, have through the expertise of their facilitating skills, empowered the girls and made them change- agents which has brought out the best in them to make the production of the Sexuality Education Series for Young Persons possible.

Thank you all for your commitment, and team work.

Finally, my thanks and appreciation go to our long time supporters who have continued to provide us with financial and technical support to enable us to have these much needed output for young persons. It is our hope that this publication would generate positive actions to protect themselves and have save and pleasurable expression of their human sexuality, sexual and reproductive health and rights. Our supporters for this project are the International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC), the African Women Development Fund (AWDF), the MacArthur Foundation, the Ford Foundation and EMpower. Their support has made it possible for us to meet the vast demands for our output by school libraries, the National Library, adolescents in and out of school and our over-increasing mailing list of subscribers, individuals and NGOs locally, nationally and internationally. The hidden voluntary expert that ensures skilful editing of our publications remains Edwin Madunagu. Thank you Eddie.

Bene E. MADUNAGU
Chairperson, GPI Executive Board
January 2010

Location of GPI Centres

Introduction

Atim 14 years old grew up in a very religious home. She obeyed all the rules and regulations as instructed by her parents and the church. Atim's parents were very busy people though they tried hard to have family prayer, breakfast and dinner together everyday.

She is intelligent, beautiful and outspoken. She had always taken the first position in her class examinations since Junior Secondary School, JSS 1. Now in JSS 3. She had become the envy of her class mates and even some parents, who used her as a yardstick to measure their children's school performance.

Atim in her teenage years had been experiencing some physical and emotional changes as she saw her breast becoming bigger, hairs were growing under her armpits and on her pubic region, etc, and she was experiencing other "funny" feelings she did not understand.

She had several unanswered questions about these new developments and the persistent "funny" feelings, but her busy parents had no time to talk about these with her, according to them, "every young girl goes through this", concluding with,"you can read some 'books' to know more".

To keep herself company, Atim had started reading romantic novels imagining how a prince charming will one day come and "sweep her off her feet" and she would live happily ever after. The fashion and entertainment magazines, she believed, gave her information on how to dress and be up-to-date in her time. The parents were happy with her reading interest, but little did she and her parents know that such information will not prepare her for the realities of life.

One day, Atim got a letter from her class mate's elder brother, Kufre who had visited her school and saw her. In the letter he

described Atim as a princess fair and the most beautiful girl in the world. She doubted him at first but the letters kept coming. In one of the letters, Kufre wrote, "In your beauty I have found my gold; my love for you flows like the river that never dries, it is forever." She had to believe, this is real. I have found my love. The novels and magazines had set the stage, love is about sweet words.

Atim responded with letters and visits, soon followed with body contacts. She was scared but the novels had described sexual intercourse as "love-making" and the experience, heavenly with no need for resistance or protection. In fact, "love-making has no consequences" except breath taking pleasure. She gave in even though her doubts had increased as the first time was not as interesting and pleasurable as described in novels and magazines.

Two months later, deeply in her routine of school, boy-friend, and church activities it dawned on her that she had not experienced her monthly menstrual period for a while. For how long she did not know but one thing was sure the changes had become rapid; her breasts had further increased and felt tender, she felt she looked fairer but could not tell for sure.

She innocently complained to her mother who took her to the hospital for a pregnancy test which was positive. Atim was shocked as no part of her novels or magazines had mentioned pregnancy, or how one could be pregnant at her age.

At the emergence of the information technology popularly called IT, especially with the introduction of the internet and cellphones, families, friends, companies, corporate organisations and the general public felt relieved over the ease to send messages to family members, clients, loved ones, etc. All that one needs to do is just sit in the comfort of the home or office or wherever one is, and receive or send messages. The contemporary saying, "The world had become a global village"

has gingered most people to be on the happening train and young people were not left out. They would seek information on how to utilize the internet while others who could not install personal internet services, would visit cyber cafes to obtain internet services. Just as people embraced these 'technological wonders,' for all kinds of information, so also has the internet been responsible for a lot of human rights violations, and become even a tool that induces negative behaviours in many young people. Peer pressure also helps to increase the rate at which young people are influenced positively or negatively through IT.

We have several reports of sexual abuses, of young people, especially girls using the internet, e.g. as far back as June 9th 2003 *The Punch* newspaper reported that a paedophile used the internet to groom underage girls for sexual activities. In and around us we have heard of bosses who lock themselves up in their offices during office hours to watch pornographic materials only to end up practising what they have just watched on their female workers by raping them.

In August 2009 there was a warning to parents on the internet over what was termed 'Sext' messages trend. Young people were reported to be sharing sexually explicit pictures of themselves via text messages and on the internet. The report added that more young people have sent a text or 'sext'. The images are of both boys and girls exposing themselves or involved in sexual acts. They are circulated by email, text messages through cell phones, bluetooth or through their social networking sites.

Television, movies, music, art, magazines, newspapers and other forms of media often send mixed/confused messages about human sexuality, particularly with regard to sexual behaviours, and relationships. Sometimes these messages are educational and beneficial, other times they are incorrect,

exploitative, or negative. Adults are often wary of the types of messages children receive through the media.

Yet, some rich parents give cell phones to their babies in nursery and primary schools but pay no attention to the usage.

Adolescents today are engaged with mass media more than ever before. Images, movies, music, and products boom all over the world, and most young people want to see the latest fashion trend, music video, or movie in order to keep up with their friends. Many people look up to music and movie stars. Everyone, young or old needs to be informed about the impact of media on human behaviour.

Who are young people?

The Oxford Dictionary of Current English defines young people as persons between the ages of 14 and 17 years. The World Health Organisation (WHO) also defines young people as individuals of ages 10-24 years. In Nigeria according to the 1991 population census, young people aged 10-24 constitute about a third of the Nigerian population. For an individual to be said to be young, it means such an individual is not far advanced in life experiences, development or existence.

What is the media?

The media is simply outlets in the process of mass communications (especially print and electronic) collectively.

The probable effects of the media on their audiences have been perceived as both positive and negative. On the other hand, a perspective has maintained that most of the social problems of modern day societies emanate from the media. Given that in most cases and in many societies, the mass media can by- pass some social and authority structures to reach the audience directly, they therefore, are capable of having strong influence on all aspects of human experiences - politics, education, behaviour, social practices and relationships.

With respect to the young people, information from the media, if not well scrutinised and critically analysed, can lead to more negative effects than positive. This is because their developing minds and

inexperience in life events coupled with social myths and misconceptions and gender prejudices, may pose as hindrances to their better understanding of such media content. Hence, this publication tries to present these influences as posed by the broadcasting media such as the radio and television, the mobile phones and internet as well as expressions through body language, as they impact positively or negatively on young people.

Chapter 1

The Broadcast Media

1.1 The Radio

This is a medium of communication through which sounds, messages, information, education, etc, are transmitted and received through electronic waves of the radio frequency. Messages, information, advertisements, educational programmes, announcements of all kinds of events, etc, transmitted on the radio are received by people of all ages which may affect them positively and or negatively.

Some of the programmes aired on some Nigerian radio stations which are of benefit to young people include "Child survival", "National Youth Service Corps motivational talk", "Quiz and debate", "HIV and you", "Something to remember," etc. These ones do have positive influence on the lives of the young people as they are enlightened on how to go about to achieve save and healthy life style. They also have public education content, particularly about the herstory/history of the nation and current events in all aspects of human endeavours for the positive development of their lives and the society at large.

While such programmes with positive influence on young people are available through radio as a medium of communication, there are some that pose challenges if not properly and critically analysed.

Such radio programmes that pose challenges and potential negative impact include: online business promotions aired on some radio channels. These programmes, like the one on the internet expose young people to the art of making fast money,

especially through currency exchange. This form of profit making by young people may have some negative effects if not processed properly. Persons involved in the programme encourage their listeners to pay between N5,000 and N10,000 for seminar training on the technique. The question is, how do these young people raise such funds without engaging in dirty pranks or dubious means?

Another programme in line with the internet business is the production of recharge cards online to sell in bulk, irrespective of the age of the person involved, so long as she or he can browse the internet. Young people that are exposed to these forms of profit making do not bother about any respectable career or profession such that they are forced into crimes when the fast deals crash.

The effect of the above and others are mostly negative because such young people are encouraged to make fast money through long hours on the internet at the detriment of their educational pursuit. They may go as far as committing fraud Via the internet just to make money and become masters of themselves at an early age, when they are neither mentally nor psychologically ready for risks involved. This may also go a long way to increasing the number of criminals in the society, in that when the business fails they find themselves unprepared and It may be too late to go back to school and pick up the pieces of their lives. Some may then end up with no future ambition and could become miscreants, popularly now being known as "Area boys and area girls."

1.2 The Television

This is another medium of mass communication where both sound and visual are used in message and information presentation and dissemination. Therefore the impact of this medium may far outweigh that of the radio whether positive or negative.

Pix from Learning About Living (LaL) package

Positive effects of television

Television programmes like news, current affairs, local dramas, etc: those that portray positive ways of life, wrong doings in the society and how to overcome them, as well as some religious programmes, go a long way to stimulate positive thinking, critical analysis, creativity, positive changes in behaviour and attitude and help in the update of knowledge on recent events and findings in the society. Such programmes also have potentials in moulding young people to become better and responsible citizens.

Negative effects of the television

Some home video presentations, some musicals, cartoons, advertisements, soap opera, sports (football in particular) have deeply distracted attention of young people from educational and career/professional goals. It is not that the intent is to corrupt because they also have lots of lessons. However, most of the young people do not

have the right skills to help them process what they hear or see. They tend to interpret what they see and hear, in ways that please them and make them "feel among" - a sense of belonging and popularity.

For some home videos, the messages, most times contain both "the good" and "the bad", which would take a mature mind to be able to pick out the good messages and to understand and discard the bad ones.

For young people, they are always excited about the bad side consciously or unconsciously, depending on the individual's upbringing. They tend to pay less attention to the good messages For instance, young people are always excited to Watch out for the behaviour of the actors and actresses, the way they talk dress and their actions, such as romance, stealing tactics/techniques bullying; various ways of telling lies, plotting coups, fighting, committing other atrocities without being seen, heard, or caught Life styles of the actors/film stars like smoking, keeping late nights clubbing joining gangs, double-dating, or keeping multiple sexual partners, being stubborn, wicked, and many others too numerous to mention, appeal to young innocent people and can have deep negative influence on the young minds.

From this, while watching films, whether foreign or local their attention is diverted from the main information the movie may project which could be of good use to them. It is not a surprise to • learn that some young people don't even pay attention to what is said in the movie rather they are interested in the action that takes place. Becuase they are impressionable and so they copy and act on what they see unless they have been given information on critical thinking and analysis skills.

Many of these situations carry gendered prejudices, emphasising sexist discriminatory roles for females with no lessons to guard the minds against gender prejudices.

After watching such movies, their intention would be to dress, talk, behave and live the life of actors/film stars whom they admire. . They may not understand that the film stars/actors whom they admire, and or are

fans of, are acting that way on the set, and not in real life. This lesson often is not given pre or post or during the film.

The musicians and their music are not left out in the group of television programmes some of which contain messages capable of negatively influencing young people. Just like some home video displays, some present day musicians are interested in composing romantic songs and in their musical videos showing off nude girls dancing to their music. These are aired on television for the entertainment of viewers, including young people, with no accompanying lessons to let them interpret the entertainment positively.

Young people act on what they see and hear, thus, the message from the actions and the wordings of the musicals convey such messages that encourage young people to be sexually active, if they want to "belong to their various peer groups". Nudity and sexual dance displays are also of frequent occurrence these days on television. Most of them cheapen females and degrade their bodily integrity, perpetuating exploitation and abuse.

Also some of the cartoons on TV contain messages with negative, discriminatory/gendered examples. They always show mischief and tricks, using various gender discriminatory portrayals and methods. Impressionable youths who watch such cartoons and others, try to act them out. With no analytical skills or consciousness, they easily believe that such mischief and harmful discriminatory practices are fun.

Business firms nowadays use sexist activities and sexual images to advertise their products on TV. Such males and females are sometimes shown engaging in one sexual act or the other for the sake of advertising a product. This is registered in the minds of the young who would then believe it is a normal way of life, trying to put into practice what they had seen, especially when using the advertised products. Others would merely use girls and women as sex objects in their promotional activities, capitalising on their ignorance and other social vulnerabilities imposed on them.

Some soap operas also pose a threat to young people almost similar to the home videos, but they differ in terms of addiction. Some soap operas aired Nigerian television stations are very addictive to viewers who will not want to miss any episode irrespective of the time it is televised.

Some issues usually addressed in these programmes range from relationships (especially with the opposite sex) to life management issues. These issues may be very useful in one way or the other to the viewers, but skills and information are needed to be able to filter the wrong messages and make use of the right ones.

Soap operas are said to be addictive because young people would go as far as to visiting friends or neighbours' houses at odd hours, scheduled for the programmes, just to watch. Such actions expose young people to all forms of abuses, including rape. Some would abandon their studies, home-work, house chores, religious activities and other positive activities just to watch operas. Such delinquent acts bring them into conflict with their parents/guardians, teachers and friends. At school, instead of discussing what was taught the previous day, students are seen in groups discussing scenes in soap operas they have watched, while some hold on to the information given whether good or bad and choose role models from the actors.

Sport activities shown on television, especially football can be interesting and entertaining to viewers, however in recent times, football lovers mostly the youths have gone as far as to forming themselves into groups of fans for a particular team or players. They will support their players or teams at all cost, on match days, and when the winners emerge, losers can fight and injure or stab "opponents" to prove their loyalty. Many young girls have been raped in such groups and, some boys and girls have been badly injured and some killed.

Many young people now spend time and money watching football matches at play houses, where they are exposed to different kinds of people who may lure them into engaging in negative behaviours. Some are crazy over second hand products in the market carrying logos or

pictures of the team they belong to, whatever such may cost.

1.3 The Mobile phone

This is the newest but fastest growing communication technology in Nigeria whereby effective communication between two or more people at different locations takes place in a matter of seconds through voice calls and text messages (SMS). Mobile phone producers in the pursuit of selling their products and attracting more customers produce cell phones that come with camera, radio, television and video camera facilities. These additional facilities are meant to enhance communication and to entertain users/callers. This reasoning is not bad. It could contain useful learning experience. But young people have found mobile phones useful for risky pranks.

Recent trend observed among this category of persons in relation to the use of mobile phones, has shown that young people have gone beyond what cell phone producers intended. Night calls between the hours of 12am and 5am when they should be having their night rest, down loading of videos and especially pornography and music into the phone to be viewed at leisure, sending of all kinds of text messages that are/may be sexual in nature, "convening" meetings outside the knowledge of parents/ guardians/teachers via text messages, have been the dimensions that young people use/misuse/abuse mobile phone technology with negative consequences. Majority of victims of the wrong ways cell phones have been utilized are girls.

Taking nude photographs during sexual activity and sending them to others , blackmailing by taping people's voices during conversation, cheating during examination through sending/ receiving examination questions/answers through text messages, telling lies/deceiving callers, including parents, playing games while lessons are going on in the class or during their study time, using this medium

for kidnapping plans and planning criminal activities such as rape, etc, have been other negative usages of cell phones.

Effects of wrong use of the mobile phone

1) Low grades in examinations, leading to failure or in the case of students paying to pass examiantions, the production of educated illiterates. Students relax from reading their books and rather rely on cheating during examination, using mobile phones. Examination questions are sent to their phones, some copy out lessons from their note books into the phone and download during exams.
2) . Young people these days no longer know how to write letters, because text messages have replaced letter writing.
3) Young people are fast becoming blackmailers and fraudsters, through the manipulation of cell phones. Some siphon credits from parents' phones regularly and the "busy" parents would hardly notice.
4) Some start sexual activities early due to what they secretly watch, read, and listen to, on their phones. The consequence, particularly for young girls, is that they end up with unwanted pregnancy and unsafe abortion.
5) Many of them are no longer trust worthy as they form the habit of lying about issues, using their mobile phones.
6) A lot more are easily introduced into cultism, with its many recorded deadly consequences.

However, the mobile phone technology is very useful in the sense that it makes communication easier, faster, and cheaper. It can also be used for money transaction. This is mostly seen among young people in tertiary institutions who school away from their homes. Parents can send money through recharge cards to their children's phones so that they in turn, can sell the cards to recover the money.

Personal issues can also be discussed without other people interfering. And some young people can set alarms and reminders in their phones to enable them to do what they had planned on time to keep abreast with

their schedule.

Recommendations

1) Media persons/houses should be sensitised on the negative effects of the media on young people so that they can check and balance programmes they air, and provide guide on the critical analysis of media messages, to assist young people to utilize the positive messages and discard the negative.

2) Young people equally need accurate and adequate information to enable them to use sophisticated mobile phones so that they are not exposed to negative uses. Every medium should provide balanced and analytical information to guide users and consumers.

3) Parents too, should use teachable moments while watching home video to correct misconceptions and to explain some ambiguous, or loaded information.

Body language

According to *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionarytenth* edition, body language is the gestures, movements and mannerisms by which a person or animal communicates with others. Since media has to do with the conveyance of information, or messages communicated, body language can, therefore be said to be part of the media. This is because individuals, both old and young can communicate with each other, using their body. Examples of body language include facial expressions such as winking, smiling, frowning, laughing, yawning, sighing, etc, and the movement of parts of the body, e.g. folding of arms, swivelling, nodding, shifting, or adjusting of clothes unnecessarily; crossing of arms and legs, beckoning, shuffling, playing with hair, ears, nose, stomach, etc.

Interpretation of body language varies from one culture to another and one society, group or family to another. Peer groups have their interpretation of a body language differently, so also are individuals. However, many body languages have common interpretations globally, e.g. nodding, which means affirmation or acceptance; frowning, meaning sadness or anger, etc.

Young people all over the world are prone to imitating what they see and hear mostly without pausing to find out the real meaning of what they are imitating. They tend to imitate behaviours and attitude from parents as well as those they admire around their neighbourhood, school, media (TV and radio) whom they take as their role models.

Through their interaction with such people directly or indirectly, there is the tendency for young people to copy some, if not all the behaviours and attitude of those they admire, body language, inclusive.

A typical example is winking which differs in interpretation from one culture or peer group to another. A case study to throw

more light on this is as presented below:

Nsisong, a 16-year-old girl admired the way an adult in her neighbourhood used to wink. She also noticed that both males and females in her school would wink at each other; so, she decided to conform without finding out the meaning of what they were doing. Nsisong was also noted to be a good Christian with good morals. One day, she winked at a boy in her compound and the boy who knew the meaning of such body language moved closer to her and asked if she knew what she was doing. She ignorantly said she was just complimenting him. The boy told her that it was beyond compliment because her body language told him she is in love with him and so she decided to communicate it, that way. Nsisong was so ashamed and confused.

The story above shows how body language could have a negative effect on young people if not properly used, especially when it has to do with making decisions about sexuality. It is also very common in our society the fact that young boys would take advantage of some body languages of girls to mean acceptance of their love proposal. For instance, a young girl may be playing with her hair, stomach, eyes; smiling, nodding and swivelling when a boy is chasing her. The boy thus, may conclude that she has accepted and then would go ahead to harass her.

Boys can also be misunderstood by girls when they either smile or laugh with a girl. A girl may take this to mean that a boy is in love with her; meanwhile, the boy may be just trying to be friendly. This can result in conflict between the two, if the boy were to chase another girl openly in her presence, or were she to find that out.

Apart from the negative side effects of poor understanding of body language, there are numerous positive sides; e.g. frowning can be used to express anger or sadness, without a resort to violence. This will simply signal to other people around that the person who frowns is not happy.

Swivelling on a seat can show a sign of discomfort, if a person has been sitting for a long time thus, helping the individual involved to be brief. Yawning may indicate hunger, tiredness or sickness, etc.

Having weighed the effects of body language as a media of communication on young people, there is need to educate them on specific issue. They should learn how to combine body and verbal languages that can effectively communicate intended meanings. For example, one should not say NO and keep smiling or keep laughing unnecessarily when clarifying values, as this will make it seem as if the person is joking.

Most importantly, young people should also try to find out from people the meaning of the body language they have seen the muse before deciding whether to use it or not. Not doing so can lead to confusion, shame and possibly sexual harassment and abuse. They should have it at the back of their mind that a body language they use in passing on compliment to friends could be an insult to other people.

1.4 images of women in the mass media

Research on the role and participation of women in the media has repeatedly shown certain structures and practices of the media which continue to perpetuate gender prejudices, portray women in negative ways without drawing attention to women's multiple roles and contribution to productive and social reproductive achievements in all spheres of life, (Tuchman 1978, Gerbner 1972, WIN 1985a, Kustow 1972).

Firstly, the media is responsible for perpetuating stereotypes of women. Women are presented either as housewives or as sex objects and commodities. Particularly dangerous and offensive is the increasing use of the images of women as schemers and manipulators of "innocent" men for

material gains. Sex work is seen only as women's profession and no one refers to male sex workers. The name, "prostitute" is used derogatorily to refer to women, and the male partners are not seen as such.

The radio, television, films and the press have portrayed women and girls' images generally as disease-carriers, rather than victims of male dominance in relationships. Perhaps the most startling recent indication of the deep-seated prejudices against women has been the furore over the dreaded Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Relentlessly, editorials, cartoons and news analyses have directly and indirectly harassed women to the extent that the word, AIDS is synonymous with any other sexually transmitted infections which women are said to acquire and transfer to lovers, husbands and unborn children. Since the public awareness campaign on AIDS started, there has been the low level societal opinion of what constitutes the disease, who the carriers are and how it can be transmitted. Thus, when media coverage reflects similar images it only reinforces societal views, regardless of its distortions. Yet, girls and women are mostly the victims of rape by HIV- positive men, including husbands, fathers, uncles, teachers, religious leaders, etc.

1.5 Advertising and photography

The portrayal of women and girls in advertising and photography are generally sexist, often not positive, encouraging, or impressive. Some advertisements on the television would either show attractive males and females drinking beer or brandy, or they would show women or girls in their role as cook/ caretaker/ nurturer perpetually crying and begging for forgiveness from their torturers and barterers. One advertisement for example, showed the husband with food in front of him while the wife gazed at him, admiringly. The message is clear and degrading. Some men

choose catering as their profession. Not all women like to cook. And many women are professionals in many careers.

Advertisements showing men could also be categorized into two ways: men in control and men in action. Business men/ executives and athletes would appear several times. Males are featured in business attire, doing the socially approved important things.
Most advertisements which feature women are for beauty products, soap, or food products. Such women are either gorgeous young women or more mature, older women advertising a cooking or cleaning product. Think: Women advertise baby products but the babies bear their fathers' name. The boys answer junior, even when the sister came first.

From the research one can easily recognize the effect of the television, radio and films on young people who constitute 75% of the viewers and listeners.

The information young people gain from what they view and listen to, if not well interpreted or filtered by a mature person with a mature mind, has the power to mould and configure the mindset of young people, especially males. For instance, the portrayal of females' stereotypes such as cooking, nurturing of family members, caretakers, etc, which are also seen as subordinate stereotypes to those of the males, makes young boys to behave as bosses over their sisters. At home, they leave all the house chores for the females, even if they are their seniors and also expect respect from them. This is as a result of what they see or hear through the media. A young boy of about 14 years was once over heard telling his elder sister that he will not wash the dishes because it's females' work and wondered if the sister did not know how to respect a man. And perhaps, this was why a man when leaving for a trip told the last child, the only male (5 years) to take

care of the home in his absence! How absurd.

Young boys would extend what they learned such as this, to their sisters at home and to their sexual partners and girlfriends.

In intimate relationships, the females are accused of transmitting various infections and diseases to their partners; and this is because of the media's involvement in putting women at the forefront as disease-carriers. Yet, virginity testing is only for girls, while boys are encouraged to test their vitality and virility. Ignorantly, some young girls continue to be subordinates to the opposite sex owing to the fact that the society through the media, has moulded and formed their mind-set to continue to behave this way so as to be loved and accepted in the family and society at large. The following case studies also help to highlight the effect of the media (television, radio, films and the mobile phone) on young people.

Case study

Esther, a young girl of 17 years was fond of watching movies and other television programmes like dramas and soap operas that had to do with love affairs. She was from a rich home where the children were given a separate parlour well furnished with television, DSTV, disc player, etc. Esther was the eldest of her two siblings who were between the ages of ten (10) and seven (7), therefore, she had full control of the television.

As soon as she would return from school, she would switch on the television and select a channel that would suit her. This became part of her and her parents did not care to check what their children were viewing, all they knew was that they were having fun.

One day Esther decided to put what she has been seeing so far from the movies into practice. She started behaving like one of the actresses she admired, by dressing like her, telling lies to

enable her to see her friends and worst of all, she quickly accepted to be involved in a sexual relationship with her male teacher who took advantage of the fact that she performed poorly in her academic work. Unfortunately for her, the teacher was soon transferred to another school thus, there was no one to help her pass examination. She failed woefully and was expelled from school.

Efforts to enrol her in another school failed as she had lost focus on school activities and had become a nuisance in the neighbourhood. She therefore became a major problem for her parents to tackle.

Lesson: If Esther's parents were conscious and interested in what their daughter was doing in and out of school, Esther would have been a very good student and a better person in future. This is an advice to parents to always check what their children view on the television and should use teachable moments to clarify issues arising from television programmes and films. The young people themselves, never should be addicted to television because this can divert attention from academic activities and mar their future. Set yourself a personal time table that gives you reading time, house work time, relaxation/TV time, home work time, etc, and ensure to read the work you did in school daily to help you to understand the next lesson.

Case study

Benjamin is a very intelligent boy from a humble home. He is a **senior** secondary school student, widely known to be humble, respectful and had good morals. His parents decided to buy him a sophisticated phone (with camera, video, bluetooth) and the phone also enabled him to browse the internet.

He made good use of his phone as every other person Because he knew that every one knew him to be morally sound he decided to

download pornography into his phone. He did this because as an adolescent who was experiencing puberty changes, he was emotionally in need of love, and so he went secret so that people will not see him as a bad boy.

One day he was viewing the pornographic downloads and so he got sexually aroused and could not control his emotions, sc he found himself raping their house maid. He was exposed and every one now calls him "pretender does the worst". He has lost his self-confidence. He is devastated and has joined a gang of rapists.

Chapter 2

Young people and the Internet

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2.1. What is the Internet?

Internet simply refers to **International Network.** It is **a** worldwide system of computer networks; a *network of networks* that consists of millions of private and public, academic, business, and government networks of local to global scope. This enables users at any one computer to get information from any other computer. The term, *Internet* and *World Wide Web* (www) are often used in everyday speech without much distinction. However, the Internet and the **World Wide Web** are not one and the same. The Internet is a global data communications system. It is a hardware and software infrastructure that provides connectivity between **computers. In** contrast, the web is one of the services communicated via the Internet. It is a collection of interconnected documents and other **resources,** linked by **hyperlinks and URLs** (uniform resource locator) **http://**
www.idtech2000.com/contact.html is an example of a URL.

How did the Internet come about?

The internet has today grown to become a significant part of our everyday lives, delivering solutions that were never thought possible, both at home, in the school, as well the workplace. Though initially designed in the 1960s as a means of communications for the American military and also for the academic community when the United States funded research projects of its military agencies to build large computer networks, the Internet has gradually evolved since the 1990s into a leading

medium for education, business transaction and information dissemination.

2.2. Why do people use the Internet?

There are people who think that the web is a playground dedicated to games and entertainment. Some have noted its potential as a general information resource. But the Internet has far surpassed such notions. Different people use the Internet in different ways and these include the need to:

1. Get news
2. Buy travel services or make reservation
3. Check sports scores and information
4. Get political news
5. Participate in online auction
6. Create content for the Internet/design a website
7. Download and listen to music files
8. Buy/sell stocks, bonds, mutual funds
9. Get health information
10. Get spiritual and religious information
11. Use support-group web sites
12. Buy a product
13. Do research for school, or job training
14. Look for information about a new job
15. Payment of bills

2.3 Young internet users (ages 18-29) are more likely than others to engage in the following activities online:

16. Research for school or job training
17. Look for new job information
18. Use instant messaging/chatting
19. Internet calls
20. Look up sports scores and information

21. Look for information about a place to live
22. Download and listen to music files
23. Share files from my computer
24. Log on using a wireless device
25. Using dating web sites
26. Use e-mail

Apart from individuals, institutions also make use of the internet to enhance productivity such as;

1. **The banking industry:** The banking industry uses the internet for the transfer of money between banks. In some cases, the bank may even be in different cities. The risk of carrying cash about for payment and the risk of accepting a cheque that may not be cleared are what buyers and sellers face respectively in a developing country like Nigeria. The only way out of this risk is connectivity to the internet.

2. **Education:** Information systems have supporting roles in education, especially in the area of research. In developed countries, the internet is the working tool of researchers. They use it to cross-pollinate ideas globally. Connectivity to the internet and proper tapping of the facilities provided by it will enhance the educational development of the nation. Educational materials and programmes from the developed countries can be easily obtained from the internet and adapted by the user. Besides, it provides a means of up-dating one's knowledge on any discipline on a daily basis.

3. **National development:** Internet is a catalyst for national development; it provides a medium for exchange of technical and scientific ideas. This function is very relevant

   for developing nations. By the use of the internet facilities, development experiences in one country can be of use in other

countries. The facilities provided by it can be used to address the developmental challenges of any developing nation.

4. **Science and health:** Medical science and other sciences have grown tremendously in developed countries while it is yet at its infancy in Nigeria in the area of IT application. What is needed most in our health institutions now is connectivity to the internet. This will keep our medical practitioners in constant touch with the latest development in medicine. Usually, before discoveries in any discipline are published for public consumption, they are flashed on the internet for comments from experts in that field. This makes those who are connected to the internet to be more current on events than their counterparts who are not connected. New programmes are coming up daily. They are blogs, twitter, My Space, YouTube, etc. The internet has become a "weapon of time consumption."

Are there risks that young people face in using the internet? Yes
Using the internet communication tools such as chat rooms, e- mail, and instant messaging can put children at potential risk of encountering online predators. The anonymity of the internet means that trust and intimacy can develop quickly online. Predators take advantage of this anonymity to build online relationships with inexperienced young people.

How do online predators work?
- Predators establish contact with kids through conversations in chat rooms, instant messaging, e-mail, or discussion boards. Many teens use peer support online forums to deal with their problems. Predators often go to such online areas to look for vulnerable victims.
- They try to gradually seduce their targets through attention,

affection, kindness, and even gifts, and often devote considerable time, money, and energy to this effort. They're aware of the latest music and hobbies likely to interest kids.

- They listen to, and sympathize with kids' problems and try to ease young people's inhibitions by gradually introducing sexual content into their conversations or by showing them sexually explicit material.
- Some predators work faster than others, engaging in sexually explicit conversations immediately. This more direct approach may include harassment or stalking. Predators may also evaluate the kids they meet online for future face-to-face contact.

Which young people are at risk?

Young adolescents are the most vulnerable age group and are at high risk of being approached by online predators. Young adolescents are exploring their sexuality, moving away from parental control, and looking for new relationships outside the family. Under the cover of anonymity, they are more likely to take risks online without fully understanding the possible implications. Young people who are most vulnerable to online predators tend to be:

- new to online activity and unfamiliar with internet etiquette
- aggressive computer users
- the type to try new, edgy activities in life
- actively seeking attention or affection
- rebellious
- isolated or lonely
- curious
* confused regarding sexual identity
* easily tricked by adults
- attracted by subcultures apart from their parents' world
- greed

All of these carry negative outcome with serious risky consequences for young adolescents, particularly girls.

2.4.   A guide for young people on the use of Internet

What ways can the risks be minimized?
There are a number of precautions that you can take as a young person to minimize the risk of being targeted by predators on the internet. These may include:
- Never downloading images from an unknown source— they could be sexually explicit.
- Using e-mail filters (i.e. deleting junk e-mails and spam from unknown sources).
- Telling a trusted adult, reaching out to NGOs focused on young people or seeking counselling immediately if anything that happens online makes them feel uncomfortable or frightened.
- Choosing a gender-neutral screen name that doesn't contain sexually suggestive words or reveal personal information.
- Never revealing personal information about themselves (including age and gender) or information about their family to anyone online and not filling out online personal profiles Stopping any e-mail communication, instant messaging conversations, or chats if anyone starts to ask questions that are too personal or sexually suggestive.
- Make a list of the type of information that should never be given out, unless a person is known or you are sure the person can be trusted, for example, - home address
  - your photo, or identifying descriptions of yourself
  - names of family members
  - school or teacher's name
  - phone number

- sports team
- hobbies or other leisure activities
- friend's names or addresses.

2.5. What parents/teachers and guardians need to do to offer necessary guidance to young people

How can you tell if your child is being targeted?
It is possible that your child is the target of an online predator if:

• **Your child spends a great deal of time online.** Most children who are victims of online predators spend a lot of time online, particularly in chat rooms, and may close the doors to their rooms and be secretive about what they do when they go to work on their computer.

• **You find pornography on the family computer.** Predators often use pornography to sexually victimize children—supplying things such as web sites, photos, and sexual e-mail messages as a way to open sexual discussions with potential victims.
Predators may use photos of child pornography to convince a child that it is normal for adults to have sex with children. You should be aware that your child may hide pornographic files on disks, especially if other family members use the computer.

• **Your child receives phone calls from people you don't know, or makes calls (sometimes long distance) to numbers you don't recognize.** After establishing contact with your child online, some online predators may try to contact young people to engage in phone sex, or to try to set up a real-world, face-to-face meeting. If children hesitate at giving out their home phone number, online sex offenders will provide theirs.

Some even have toll-free 1-800 numbers, so potential victims can call them

without their parents' knowledge. Others will tell children to call collect—and then, with caller ID or call display, the predators can easily determine the child's phone number.

Do not allow your child to meet a stranger they have met online, in person, without your supervision.

• **Your child receives mails, gifts, or packages from someone you don't know.** It's common for offenders to send letters, photographs, and gifts to potential victims. Online sex offenders even send airline tickets to entice a child or teen to meet them in person.

• **Your child withdraws from family and friends, or quickly**

turns the computer monitor off or changes the screen if an adult enters the room. Online predators work hard to drive wedges between kids and their families, often exaggerating minor problems at home. Sexually victimized children tend to become withdrawn and depressed.

• **Your child is using someone else's online account.** Even kids who don't have access to the internet at home may meet an offender while online at a friend's house or at another public place, even the library. Predators sometimes provide victims with a computer account so they can communicate.

Parents can help protect their kids by becoming aware of the risks related to online communication and being involved in their kids' internet activities. One of the best ways to assist young people to use the internet safely and wisely is to show interest in the sites they visit and the activities in which they engage. Encourage them to share their favourite sites, games and chat rooms with you. Offer your opinions about those you think are fun or useful and also comment on those you think are not suitable and remembering to give reasons for your opinions.

Ongoing and open discussions about internet use at home, at school and with other people will encourage young people to be mindful of what is acceptable nd help them to develop sense of responsibility for monitoring their own activities.

What can you do if young child is being targeted?
If your child receives sexually explicit photos from an online correspondent, or if she or he is solicited sexually in e-mail, instant messaging, or some other way online, contact your local police. Save any documentation, including e-mail addresses, website addresses, and chart logs to share with the police.

Check your computer for pornographic files or any type of sexual communication these are often the warning signs.

Monitor your child's access to all live electronic communications, such as chat rooms, instant messaging, and e-mail. Online predators usually meet potential victims in chat rooms at first, and then continue communicating with them through e-mail or instant messaging.

The Print Media

The print media **has been known** to **be** one of the oldest forms of information, education and communication (EC) for knowledge, attitude, practice and behavioural changes. It has proven effective on circulation of news on different issues widely before the communication revolution called internet. It really did prove not only useful in effective circulation of news and information on typical issues, it has remained a very effective way of keeping the art of reading in style with the advent of magzines of all kinds, sports, entertainment, romance, etc.

Young people are a unique population, in terms of characteristics and needs, and they often face unique challenges as a result of their level of development.

Young people are youths-persons between the ages of 15-30, adolescents-persons between the ages of the ages of 13-19. The **term,** young people is used to refer to persons in the above categorized **age** ranges -10 to 30 years.

Young people are persons still developing physically, mentally and otherwise. Hence, the media, and specifically the print media should play an active role in clarifying values and socialising young people.

Though today more and more young people easily turn on the TV and radio but on average, youths spend some amount of time each **day** engaged in leisure reading of books, magazines, newspapers **and** billboards. Thus the print **media has a** potential for positive human knowledge and development.

Brief history of the print media

The history of the print media and written communication follows the progress of civilization which in turn, moves in response to changing cultural technologies.

It has been 30,000 years since the first recorded evidence of written communication, and it is still dramatically changing.

As far back as 25,000-30,000B.C; first humans printed descriptive pictures on cave walls. These drawings depicted deep religious beliefs, fears and everyday life. The pictorial type found in caves of southern France and Spain was the beginning of written communications for the human kind.

At first, stones and clay tablets were used to express thoughts. With the passage of time other means of writing media were developed. The first portable and light writing media were papyrus rolls and early parchments. Papers made of dried reeds in China {500-170B.c}.dated in 105B.C,Tsai Hun of China invented paper as we know it today.

The intervention of paper revolutionized the face of the print media, and written words became more accessible. In 11th Century A.D.Pi Sheng of China started to print with movable clay type, and in the 6th Century Chinese engravers mastered the art of wood- block writing. In 100 A.D. CE, the first bound book was in the market.

3.1 How the print media influences young people positively

The print media is a unique form of the media, because obviously, most people with opportunities to learn in formal or in an informal settings, cannot do without the paper and pen, almost on a daily basis. The print media remains a good source of hand felt resources; and beautifully printed pictures of events or stories for young people to see and appreciate and easy learning tools.

Young people often do not forget stories told by reading out loudly to them, as well as colour-filled and beautiful pictorial religious books and magazines of all kinds, with images on fashion, celebrity and sports.

Young people use the print media to continue the culture of reading, helping them to study and increase academic performance in schools, including obtaining good grades, through developing good reading culture.

Young people have continued to use the print media to update themselves on different issues about self, society, health, etc and as a main source of research and learning.

They continue to consult the print media, particularly magazines, to learn about their lives, romance, society and the culture around them. Print media has provided a fantastic platform for young people to relax and in reading a romance novel, building vocabulary, writing and speaking English, and being knowledgeable on life's issues.

Documents, histories, events, actions, etc, written down in books have continued to form libraries as valuable place for young people to research, study and do assignments. Most importantly, young people are able to tell stories of their culture, country, people, etc in the past as if they were there because they were written down and documented. Many young people register in "reading clubs" to develop and improve in learning through reading from the print media.

3.2 How the print media influences young people negatively

Many magazines for example, focus on young people. Such publications include *HINTS, Better Lover, Hearts,* and many more. They continue to form a large part of young people's library, especially young females who turn to the pages of the magazines for advice on fashion, beauty and, especially dating and romance. Such publications- romance novels and magazines-continue to provide unreal stories of romance and sexual activity, with little or no accurate or scientific information on how to form and/or maintain the various types of friendship/ relationship, resist peer

pressure, and on how to abstain from sexual activity as well as the consequences of involving in an unprotected sexual activity. They often provide fantasies that young people act out with attendant risks.

They also often present sexual activity for young people as glamorous and the 'in thing' with no consequence and encourage young people to be 'experts' by providing them with information on situation - handling techniques.

Such books continue to emphasize that women and girls are the weaker sex who can't think logically, but flooded with emotions and that they should only acquire specific skills or do specific jobs to become "real ladies."

Pictures of slim and thin women and girls continue to flood pages of magazines and are used as newspapers' selling points. Example: The sun girl of the sun newspapers, etc. This way, they create an obsession for young girls to be thin and shapely; lowering the self-esteem of those who do not possess such "attractive" impression for a potential lover. Important topics like contraceptives, Sexually Transmitted Infections {STIs} and unsafe abortion are rarely seen in the magazines, if there are, most times,they show inadequate judgement and the facts may be incorrect. Most news are about women as victims and very few talk about women achievements in all spheres of human endeavours.

3.3 Poem on the media

My head is filled with information
information, information, information lots of information each time I
open a book or a magazine
wonder. How useful are they to me?.

I read a novel to relax and I'm told
as a young person
love comes like the wind,
sexual intercourse is a must part of love
it's the only proof it's love.

I watch a movie and see
that as an ideal girl that I have to be slim
I have to have a beautiful shape
I do not need to be intelligent to be seen
my beauty is all I need

I listen to the radio
I am told that young people are
restless, impossible and difficult to control
the criteria to qualify marriageable girls/women
I have to know
cookery, be fashionable, talk lady-like, etc

because every female's education ends in the
kitchen
My head is filled with lots of information,
information to assist me grow,
grow into a healthy adult in my society.

By Emelia Eyo

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3.4 Recommendations

The use of print media has both positive and negative consequences on young people.

Though the print media is essential in updating the knowledge of young people, it has in recent times, had lots of negative effects on them. It is most about what sells, and not what educates, inform and positively influences.

Young people should learn to clarify their values, knowing that not all they read in books or newspapers apply to their lives. Almost not all the stories are true.

Parents should learn to interact openly with their children discussing sexuality issues openly and giving young people an opportunity to "air" their minds and use such opportunities as teachable moments to pass on correct information on relevant issues.

Editors of magazines should publish more relevant contents with correct and adequate information for young people to learn from.

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PROFILE OF

GIRLS' POWER INITIATIVE
(GPI) NIGERIA

towards an empowered womanhood

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.

Location of GPI centres

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 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 gender end 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
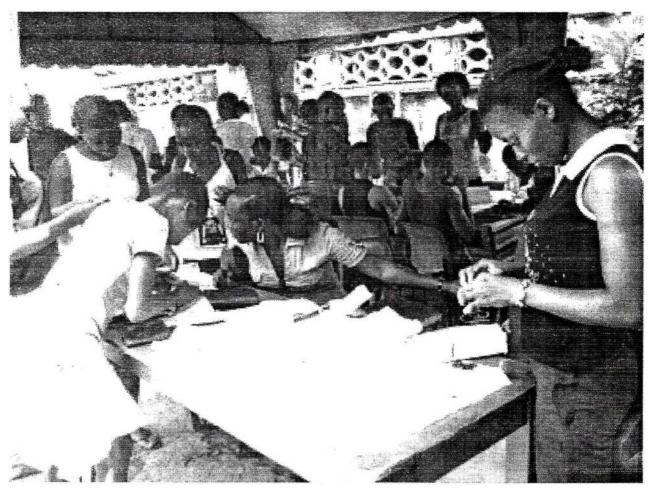
Quarterly newsletter

Internship programmes

Workshops/Trainings

Capacity-building

Youth Talent festivals

Gender Development Institute
Community intervention/social work
Economic skills training
Life management skills development
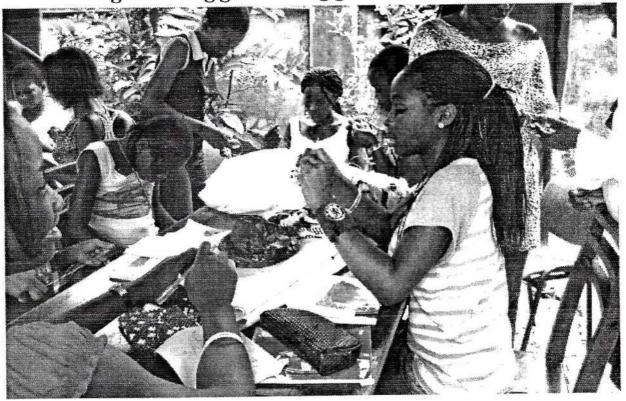Networking and collaborating with other NGOs Research and documentation

GPI girls during training on card-making

GPI girls, Coordinator, some staff and students after quiz competition to mark June 16

GPI graduating girls during graduation ceremony

GPI girls during training on beading

Session during GPI holiday programme for GPI outreach schools

Community Video Watch

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

Prof Bene Madunagu and GPI girls who emerged winners in a competition on the tying of head gear during the youth talent festival, organized by Girls' Power Initiative

Teachers and the Coordinator of GPI Calabar Centre, Prof Bene Madunagu during training of teachers on SFLHE

GPI girls using the E-FLHE in learning

Most important accomplishments of GPI

- International award 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 implementation of the National Sexuality Family Life and HIV/AIDS Education Curriculum as well as in providing resource materials for the teachers and 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 centre-based lessons, school holiday programmes, radio and television programmes and regular quarterly newsletter, among other strategies 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 the 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 CRS SACA to be part of the exercise to take inventory and 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 GP 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)."

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

Trafficking in Girls -2002

GPI song book - 2002

GPI training manual Levels 1, 2 and 3 - 2003

GPI at 10-2004

Sexuality education series for young persons:

No. 1 - Decision-making: Postponing sexual activities - 2005

No. 2 What you need to know about Sexually Transmitted infections,
including HIV/AIDS - 2005

No. 3 - My body my responsibility: Growing up healthy - 2005

No. 4 -Interpersonal relationships - 2006

No. 5 - Questions Adolescents Ask - 2007

No. 6 - Foundations of Human Sexuality Education - 2009

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♦ **Benin-City Centre**

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♦ **Asaba Centre**

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♦ **National Headquarters/Calabar Centre**

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