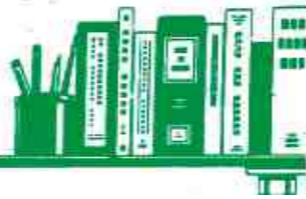




# Resources



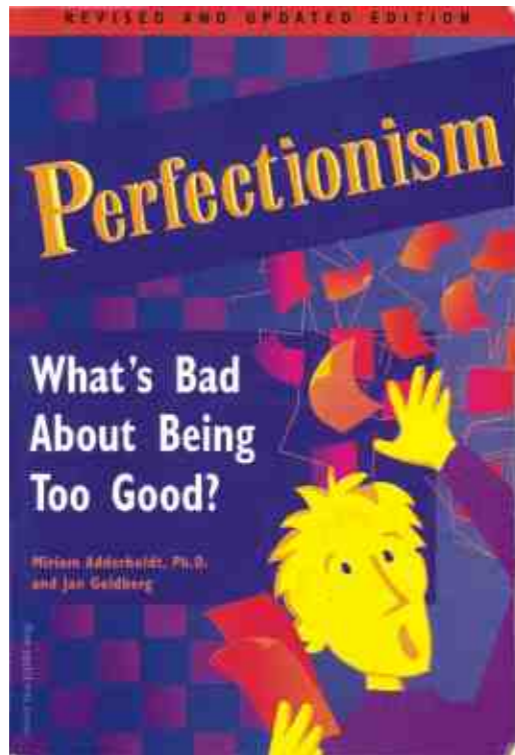
The materials listed here are resources on adolescent development. Although AHl does not distribute any of these materials, they are available for use within our reference library at the AHl Youth Centre located at 17 Lawal Street, Off Oweh Street, Fadeyi, Lagos

## BOOKS

### PERFECTIONISM: WHAT'S BAD ABOUT BEING TOO GOOD?

Miriam Adderhold, Ph.D & Jan. Gold Berg

Are you a high achiever? A straight "A" student? A procrastinator? A workaholic? Are you hard on yourself or always anxious about your abilities? Then this book is just for you! This book helps you find out if you are a perfectionist and also explores some of the reasons why you are. It goes as far as offering lots of useful strategies for learning how to ease up on yourself and get your perfectionism under control. It also highlights the experiences of famous people who have succeeded despite an unlucky start.



### EMPOWER YOURSELF: EVERY WOMAN'S GUIDE TO SELF-ESTEEM

Ada P. Kahn, Shella Kimmel

"Empower yourself" is a book about feeling more confident and satisfied with who you are. It helps people especially women get rid of the old negative messages that may have lowered their self-esteem and self-confidence. This book helps you become your own heroine

by showing you how to become a more likable and admirable person. If you want to boost your self-esteem and sense of personal power, get this book and replace passive behaviour.

### CHOOSE A FUTURE!

The Center For Development And Population Activities

Choose a Future brings together Ideas and activities to help adolescent girls shape their own lives and create their own options. This is a programme guide for facilitators and trainers working with girls ages 12-20 years. Girls are actively involved in creating their own solutions to situation they encounter at home, in school, at work and with male and female peers.

### I LIKE BEING ME

Judy Lally

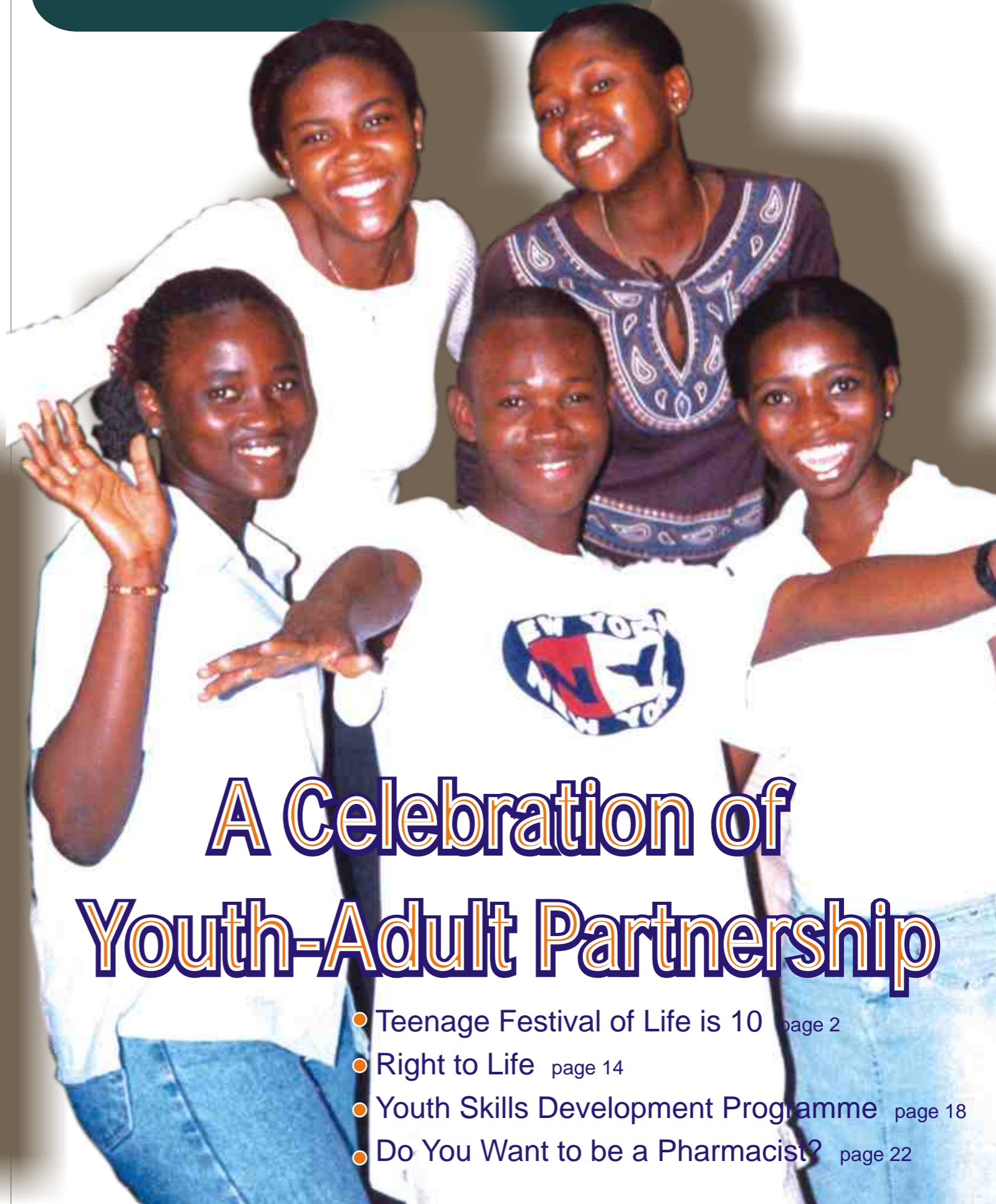
This book is made up of 26 rhyming poems and is written specially for children. The poems invite children to believe in themselves, learn from mistakes, cooperate, share, help others, tell the truth, make positive choices and more. Each poem is clear, understandable and relevant to children's everyday life.



# GROWING UP

A Newsletter for Young People

Action Health Incorporated  
December 2003 Vol. 11 No 4  
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## GROWING UP

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

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# TEENAGE FESTIVAL OF LIFE AT TEN

FEYI FOWOWE



AHI's Executive Director, the Finance and Admin. Manager, youth assistants and peer educators in an exciting mood after the festival

The Teenage Festival of Life (TFL) is a celebration of life. It is a celebration of the potentials, talents and skills of young people ranging from poetry, singing, acting, writing and even painting! It is a celebration of the achievements of the adolescents and a recognition of their efforts to address issues affecting their health and development. Little wonder, young people from across the State troop in every year to celebrate the essence of their existence. No one is left out of the fun as in-school and out-of-school youths, trained peer educators of AHI, and young people from other non-governmental organizations come together from different parts of Lagos State to participate in the festival. Adults are also not left out, as principals, vice-principals, school teachers, parents, government officials and donor agencies also participate in the TFL to listen to what the youth have to say and learn from them. This perhaps explains the reason why many people, both the young and the "not



so young" look forward to the month of November every year when the event holds. The Teenage Festival of Life was initiated in 1993. From November 1993, it has served as a forum for educating young people on the challenges of growing up and to display to the adult audiences the skills acquired through the year. It also exhibits the best talents in drama, songs, poetry, essay writing,

art and poster design from over 34 secondary schools in the Somolu, Kosofe and Mainland Local Government Areas of Lagos State. (Areas where AHI operates its school based youth development programmes). Over the years, different professionals have been contracted for such training workshops, in preparation for the festival. This indeed has added a touch of professionalism to the event

is that it is the involvement of young people in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the programme.

Thus, preparations for the festival start very early in the year to ensure that the festival is an eventful one. A few months to the programme, a planning committee comprising of youths who are usually AHI trained peer educators is set-up to come



A cross-section of guests at the festival

as evidenced by the performance of the students on the day of the festival. Although over the years the Teenage Festival of Life has witnessed a high turn out of students, each year, a campaign is launched to publicize the event. Posters and handbills are distributed in schools and placed in strategic places where young people meet. These posters/handbills state the theme of the festival, venue and date, the different categories of entries, expected prizes and the rules and regulations of the event. Jingles are also aired on radio to further sensitize the public about the event. One very unique feature of the festival

up with strategies and activities which will make the festival a successful one. On the day of the event, the young people serve as ushers, registrars and comperes. After the festival, young people come together again to assess the event and to



Dr. Kole Shettima Regional Director John D & Catherine T MacArthur Foundation (left) and Ambassador Segun Olusola watching the TFL presentations in rapt attention

identify the lessons learnt during the festival and make suggestions on how to improve on the following festival. It is indeed the young peoples festival.

The 2003 Teenage Festival of Life witnessed a celebration of a decade of creativity. The tenth year anniversary of the festival featured a combined presentation of songs, drama and poetry competition written by young people through their respective schools with the theme "Youth Adult Partnership: Empowering Today's Youth For Future Challenges". The Main Auditorium of the University of Lagos was the venue for the festival and was filled to capacity, as over 3,000 adolescents representing 51 secondary schools from Somolu, Kosofe, Mainland and the Ikorodu Local Education Districts were present. One objective of this year's festival was to create awareness about youth-adult partnership as a major strategy for facilitating the empowerment of the youths in order for them to be able to face future challenges and to make significant contributions to their lives and the society in which they live. Thus, every activity carried out during the event re-emphasized the fact that youths and adults need each other





Students of Baptist Snr. High School celebrating their victory for emerging 1st in songs category

and need to work together for the purpose of attaining sustainable improvement in the health and lives of young people. The festival championed a new "policy" on the need for Youth- Adult Partnership through drama, songs and poetry presentations.

As part of the preliminary activities, a one-day training workshop was organized to enlighten participating schools on the theme of the festival. This has always been the practice and serves as a means of building the capacities of the students in drama, poetry, painting and music which are the major categories young people compete in. The teachers who would groom the students are also not left out of the training workshop but are introduced to the requirements of the competition. This year's TFL training workshop was handled by a renowned playwright and film producer, Mrs. Bunmi Oyinsan, of the Cultural Action Network (CULAN). The 2003 TFL featured 31 drama entries, 20 song entries and 15 poetry entries. To make the selection fair and without bias, a team of consultants were contracted to judge all entries submitted. Members of the Nigerian Authors Association and Women Writers of Nigeria marked the scripts submitted for the drama, and judged them according to laid down criteria.

A harmonization meeting was held to assess and score each script based on the criteria agreed upon. The scores were collated, the entries ranked according to their respective scores, and the 10 best scores were obtained. In order to obtain the three best entries in the different categories, a two-day pre-judging exercise was organized. In company of the other judges who had participated in selecting the 10 best entries, Mrs. Joke Jacobs, a popular Nigerian artist was at the pre-judging exercise as one of the judges. Criteria such as voice projection, theme realization and originality were used in selecting the best three entries in the Drama, Poetry and Songs categories. At the end of the pre-judging exercise which had 405 students and 35 teachers in attendance, Lagos City College, Ogudu Senior Grammar School and Angus Memorial

Senior High School ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively in the drama category. Baptist High School, Ikosi High School and Igbobi College ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively in the songs category, while Apostolic Church Grammar School, Gbagada Senior Grammar School and Ajayi Crowther Memorial Senior Grammar School ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively in the poetry category.

As part of the preparation for the festival, a comprehensive grooming exercise which lasted for 10 days was organized for the winning schools. This was to ensure that the presentations on the TFL day conformed to acceptable standards of stage performance. To make this a reality, Mrs. Joke Silver-Jacobs conducted grooming sessions with the students. A dress rehearsal was also conducted to afford the participants the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the stage and costumes as will be presented on the day of the festival. Comperes, Registrars and the Ushers for the event also participated in the dress rehearsals. 28 young people were selected to act as ushers and registrars after a rigorous interview process. These young people included both in-school and out-of-school youth.



Mrs. Oluseyi Antonio, representative of Mrs. Oluremi Tinubu First Lady of Lagos State reading her speech



Angus Mem. Senior High School presenting a playlet titled "Tides of Life" group.

The day of the festival was heralded with shouts of excitement as old friends re-united and the hall became a beehive of activities as students walked up and down the aisle making final arrangements before the commencement of the programme. The hall was filled to capacity as students and special guests clapped and cheered obviously caught in the euphoria of the moment. In her welcome address, the Executive Director of AHI, Mrs. 'Nike Esiet stressed the importance of developing skills and competence in young people, which would empower them for future challenges.

The festival was graced by eminent personalities including the representative of the wife of the Lagos State Governor Mrs. Aderemi Tinubu who was invited as the Special Guest of Honour and represented by Mrs. O. Antonio, Ambassador Olusegun Olusola and the Country Representative of the MacArthur Foundation Dr. Kole Shettima who was the Chairman of the programme. Other NGOs working in related field also participated while some of them exhibited their products and services as a way of reaching out to their target



Dan Foster (Cool FM radio personality) encouraging the young people about the importance of making responsible decisions

There was no dull moment as the crowd of over 3,000 people applauded and cheered during the various presentations. The highlights of the day's activities included presentations by winning schools, a playlet titled "Rape and the Law" performed by the Legal Research and Resource Development Centre and another titled "The Torch" which was presented by the AHI drama troupe. Mr. Dan Foster a popular radio presenter also made a special guest appearance and shared his growing-up experience with the young people.

The peak of the event was the presentation of gifts to the winning schools.

The gifts that were given out this year were unique - a computer system with accessories, a television set, a video player/recorder, an audio system, a guitar and a VCD player. The students who had worked long and hard to earn the prizes came forward amidst much joyful cheers, laughter and jubilation to receive their prizes. One of the students from the

winning schools expressed herself this way, "now I believe more in myself. I believe I can achieve whatever I set my mind on achieving". The day's event was rounded up with a lot of dancing, singing and lots of refreshments too.

As the memories of this year's TFL continues to linger, a lot of young people are already looking forward to the following year's celebration. The



# Poems

## Female Genital Mutilation- A Diabolical Act

Listen to the despondent cry of the young girl  
Hear her forlorn cry for mercy  
Her wailing never loud enough to ears  
Tears drip from her eyes like water  
Seeking union with the sea.

The girl child!  
Her head buried in wet hands as she sobs  
Enveloped in a phobia of what is about to occur  
Radiating feelings of affliction  
But without anyone to parrot her opinion  
Culture and tradition enveloping her voice

Erroneous reasons they give  
It's a passage to motherhood they say  
It makes your vagina look better they reiterate  
It reduces libido and curbs promiscuity they recapitulate  
It would make you fertile they iterate  
Today, you'll become a woman, they echo to her hearing.

Like a lamb for "sacrifice"  
She is led to the spot of "transformation"  
Alas! The cutting object, her vagina  
She is being mutilated  
Her once bright and dazzling smile turns  
Into screams of pains

She passes out, only to wake up  
A different person...  
Female Genital Mutilation!  
It's discrimination against the female child  
It's violence against the girl child  
It's violation against her rights  
Let's put a halt to this diabolical act  
...it's indeed a preposterous deed...

- 'Sola Fagorusi.  
OAU Ife

## The Greatest Legacy

Knowledge is light  
Ignorance is darkness  
Education confers knowledge  
And knowledge is power  
Education is the greatest legacy  
Which any generation can bequeath to its posterity  
Seek then first abstinence  
Axe down first the timber of early sexual intercourse  
Wage then first the war against STDs and AIDS  
Proper use of condoms and protection will be added

- **Blessing Obideano.**

## Learn To Say Thank You

Learn to say 'Thank You' to God  
For every little deed  
He spared you all till today

Learn to say 'thank you' to your parents  
For they care everyday for you.

Learn to say 'thank you' to your teachers  
They give sound advice  
And provide for your needs

Learn to say 'thank you' to your friends  
They help you when in need.

Learn to appreciate little things  
Like words that make a rhyme.

- **Helen Ejeh**

## Fire Of Love

When the ugly night knocks  
Wearing on this graying looks  
By the fire of love I bask  
Enjoying the warmth till daybreak.

The coal of love is still burning  
The fire of love is still flaming  
Puffing out smoke into the fold  
Calling out folks in the cold

Swaddled we are in a blue blanket  
Cuddled we are in warm arms  
Nuzzled we are by a fresh breathe  
Spell bound we are held by the real trill of love.

- **Nwamefor Stephanie  
Akwa, Anambra**

# PHOTO REPORT



Young people from schools across Lagos State arriving at the University of Lagos Main Auditorium, venue of the festival



AHI's Executive Director with Miss Adeola Olunloyo M. C. of the festival



Tenny and Seun, young comperes during the festival



Veteran Broadcaster, Mrs. Bimbo Oloyede presenting gifts to some of the winners



AHI drama troupe depicting STDs in their most creative way at TFL 2003



Students of Lagos City Snr. College jubilating for emerging 1st in the drama category





# Cartoon



# Dear Diary ~~YES~~

MOJI ONIFADE

## MONDAY

Dear Diary, I think I have really gotten myself into trouble this time around! Can you imagine that security guard having the nerve to tell me that he'd report my friends and I to the school authority for going out of the school premises when we were supposed to be in our hostels except I agreed to go out with him! I couldn't believe my ears and I'm sure, I must have looked like a fool because I just stared at him with my mouth wide open. I later got myself together and told him to give me some time to think about it. I definitely must come up with a plan or I'd be in big soup!

## TUESDAY

The most unbelievable thing happened today. Henry, the class captain was caught cheating during the Geography test. He had sneaked his book in and was busy trying to spy the answers when Mr. Julius caught him! He cried and pleaded and of course said it was the "work of the devil" but he was taken to the vice principal's office and has been suspended for two weeks. I wonder why anyone would want to cheat, especially Henry. Meanwhile, I'm still thinking about what to do about the security guard.

## WEDNESDAY

I am so upset! I was on my way to the class for evening prep when I saw the security guard. I had been avoiding him but it seemed he had been waiting there all the while expecting me to appear soon. He was obviously pleased to see me. I felt like giving him a slap but I had to smile for fear of upsetting him, and guess what? The old security man brushed my backside with his hands. Even now, when I think about it, I hate

myself. Dear Diary, it seems as if I'm always getting myself into trouble! God knows I'd never break school's rules again!

## THURSDAY

I decided to talk to Tope, my seat partner today about the security guard. I had done some underground work and learnt that his name is Danladi and that he's married with six kids. Furthermore, I was not the first or only girl he would harass sexually, he had done that to many other girls and some of them actually agreed to have sex with him! I told Tope all this and she just smiled at me. She told me that she had also been a victim of sexual harassment and this time it was Mr. Dave, our English teacher who had made passes at her! She seemed so relieved to share her experience with me and said she had been too scared to talk about it. I realized that many other girls must be going through the same thing.

## FRIDAY

Every one is talking about the social night coming up next week, and it seems everyone is doing something! I am thinking of dancing but I'd rather sing. Oh well, I'd make up my mind for sure before the day of the social nite. I overheard a group of boys talking about smuggling alcohol into the venue of the party! I wasn't sure, if I heard right, so I decided to pretend to join in their conversation since I knew most of them. I sat down, smiled sweetly and said 'hi' but they stopped talking and some of them actually stood up and left. That confirmed my greatest fear -

there is going to be alcohol at the social night I am now actually thinking of not going. I am in enough trouble as it is.

## SATURDAY

I have been thinking about everything Tope told me and I think its high time we did something about this harassment going on. I decided to ask her if she knew anyone in particular who had been harassed at anytime. She was skeptical at first but when I told her about my motive, she mentioned three girls all of whom I knew! I didn't know that harassment was so rampant. Dear Diary, pray for me; I have decided to talk to these three girls and see if we can come up with a plan to tackle the problem. Someone just has to do something and I guess it has to start with me!

## SUNDAY

My parents came to visit me today. I was quite surprised since it was'nt the school's visiting day, neither was it my birthday. I was however glad when they told me that they had come for a wedding ceremony close to my school and decided to check on me. I thought of telling my parents about the security guard, but I knew if I did that, I'd also have to tell them about the offence I committed, so I decided to keep my mouth shut! However, I had a meeting later on in the evening with Tope and the other three girls whom she told me about yesterday. The girls were quite shocked to learn that I knew they were victims of sexual harassment and that I was a victim myself. They were also quite skeptical about my plans to do something to put a stop to it. However, after much cajoling they decided to help. One of them actually said something that shocked me! I'd tell you about it in the next edition.



## INDEPENDENCE DAY AT AHI

When the nation celebrated Nigeria's 43<sup>rd</sup> Independence Anniversary, Action Health Incorporated (AHI) was not left out as students from several secondary schools gathered at the AHI Youth Centre to commemorate the event. It was a day to celebrate Nigeria as well as look at the problems confronting the Nigerian child. Thus, the theme of this year's commemoration was "The Rights of the

Nigerian Child". The objective of the programme was to sensitize young people on the rights of children and the role of different agencies in securing these rights. Participants were involved in educative discussions which included brainstorming sessions and group activities which were geared towards eliciting information from young people about their rights. The participants

showcased their talents through the rendition of songs. At the end of the programme, every young person present agreed that without the rights of the Nigerian Child being secured, Nigeria cannot have a healthy generation of youth and ultimately, the nation's progress would be hampered. Thus, it was agreed that all stakeholders, as well as children should be involved in a participatory process towards ensuring that the rights of Nigerian children are secured.

## LADY OAK ASSOCIATION'S SEMINAR

As one of its programme strategies in achieving the goal of improving the health and well-being of adolescents in Nigeria, Action Health Incorporated in collaboration with the Lady Oak Association, a non-governmental philanthropic organization organized a one-day seminar on adolescent sexuality and HIV/AIDS. The programme which took place on 6<sup>th</sup> September aimed at increasing young people's awareness about adolescent sexuality and



Lady Oak Association members, participants and facilitators

equipping them with the necessary information and skills that would enable them make informed choices. Young people who participated in the programme had the opportunity of learning skills related to decision making, peer pressure, friendship, dating, goal setting and HIV/AIDS. The participants were divided into groups according to their ages. The first group comprised of young people within the ages of 10-15 while the second group was made-up of young adults within

the ages of 16 – 24 years. The programme commenced with a brief welcome address and self-introduction of the participants during which each of the participants had a workshop name by which he/she would be addressed for the duration of the programme. This was a welcome idea to the participants and it helped to create a more informal and relaxed atmosphere which facilitated free interaction among the participants. Pre and post tests were administered to

assess the level of information the participants had before and after the training.

Other activities carried out during the sessions were anonymous questions time, role-plays, group activities, video playback and discussions. The young people in their response expressed their appreciation at

being able to freely air their views and feelings in the course of the sessions. Many of them attested to the fact that the methods of facilitation had helped them gain a better understanding of issues affecting them and also helped them correct many misconceptions they had before the programme. Gifts were also distributed during the sessions to encourage participation in the educative session.

## OUTREACH IN SOMOLU MARKET

The awareness outreach for the month of November was filled with a lot of fun as 48 young people from different parts of the metropolis gathered together to create awareness about the AHI youth center as

well as publicize the Teenage Festival of Life which was scheduled to hold later in the month. As early as 8.30am, young people had gathered together to learn new songs to be rendered during the

outreach and also map out areas to be covered. Every young person had a role to play and gladly shared responsibilities amongst themselves. One strategic place which the young people covered was the Somolu market. They educated



Young people during the awareness outreach programme

buyers and sellers on the significance of the AHI Youth Centre and encouraged the young traders in the market to visit the AHI Youth Centre. The young people were able to pass their message across through playlet and this drew the attention of every one in the market. The young people also jogged round the streets of Somolu area distributing handbills, pamphlets and Growing Up newsletters. At the end of it all, many of the youth were of the opinion that through the outreach, a greater number of young people and adults were reached more than ever before.

## PEER EDUCATOR'S TRAINING

The year 2003 peer educators' training by AHI took place between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 2003. It was organized with the aim of increasing access to sexuality education among in-school adolescents by using the peer health educators as focal persons for the dissemination of factual information and also to serve as role models for promoting responsible behaviours among their peers. A total of 89 peer educators participated in the training programme which held for a period of 6 days. The selection of such candidates began as early as May, with the placement of adverts at the AHI Youth Centre and the notification of the Health and Life Planning Clubs (HLPC) in schools through letters and registration forms sent to all secondary schools in Somolu, Kosofe and few schools in Mainland Local Education Districts. An interview was conducted to select from the 150 students who submitted applications. Criteria such as ability to communicate

effectively, comfort level with discussing issues of adolescent sexuality, and interest in Health and Life Planning Club were used as guidelines for selecting participants. The actual training commenced with a one-day orientation programme for all the participants. This was to acquaint participants with the objectives of the



Peer educators in a class activity during the training

programme. The students were divided into two teams which were further sub-divided into six groups. Each group was expected to carry out and present group assignments on each day of the training. As part of the orientation programme, a resource person from the Bloom Cancer Care and Support Centre, Mrs. Margaret Tijani made a presentation on Cancer

awareness as it relates to self-testicular examination for males and self breast examination for females. There was also a session on Harmful Traditional Practices which highlighted various types of harmful traditional practices.

During the 6-day training, participants were taken through topics under the 6 key concepts covered in Sexuality Education.

Some of those topics include menstruation and menstrual hygiene, pubertal changes and how to cope, values and values clarification, gender issues, body image and self esteem, communication with parents and peers and facilitation techniques.

Many of the young people's expectations were met through the different strategies employed to pass information on each of these topics. Such strategies included group assignments, role-plays, experience sharing by old peer educators and anonymous questions. This was reflected in the post-test taken by the students, which revealed a great level of improvement in the knowledge participants had on the topics discussed.

## NIGERIA-INDIA EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

The Adolescent Sexuality and Reproductive Health Learning Exchange Programme was organized by an Indian

based NGO, Creating Resource For Empowerment and Action (CREA) from 20<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> October 2003 in India.

Action Health Incorporated was represented by Miss Chieme Ndukwe (Programme Officer), Tenny Tunkarimu and Abimbola Jogbenu (Youth Assistants) alongside other representatives from Girls

Continued on page 12





Some of the Nigerian delegates with their India counterparts

Power Initiative, Adolescent Health and Information Projects, International Centre for Reproductive and Sexual Rights and Dr. Moji Odeku from the Federal Ministry of Health, Nigeria.

The meeting provided an opportunity for both countries (Nigeria and India) to learn from each other's challenges, constraints

and obstacles in order to identify and suggest the way forward in ARH issues. "As a young person present at the meeting I must say that it was a good experience because I have come to realize that I have a role to play in promoting Adolescent Sexuality and Reproductive Health (ASRH), and also serve as an advocate in the field. I also

had the opportunity of visiting other Organisations doing similar work as AHI but using different approaches to disseminate information to young people about their sexuality, e.g. "The Body Literacy programme". I also got to understand how culture and tradition could affect young people and their sexuality" says Tenny.

"Thus, I learnt that I have a role to play as a young person in planning and executing educational activities, giving particular attention on how gender roles make a difference, accelerating learning and information, on life skill programmes and making sure families and communities respond to adolescent sexual and reproductive health needs" adds Bimbo.

- Tenny Tunkarimu & Bimbo Jogbenu

## NIGERIAN YOUTH AT GLOBAL FORUM

From 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> September 2003, 30 young people between the ages of 15 - 24 years gathered together at the UN Building Church Center in New York for a five-day meeting. This meeting was organized by the



Eunice Aghete addressing delegates at the Youth Partners Meeting in New York

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and its purpose was to empower a group of 34 young people from various countries of the world. These young people would serve as advocates and actively participate in efforts to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic amongst young people. This would be achieved by establishing a youth-adult partnership that will jointly advocate for increased commitment and investment for HIV/AIDS prevention at sub-national, national, regional and global levels.

Nigeria was represented by Miss Eunice Aghete, a youth Staff of Action Health Incorporated. Before the meeting, there

was an eight-week electronic forum discussion during which participants shared experiences, country situations, networked and got to know each other even before the actual meeting.

During the meeting, Youth Partners (a name the young people were fondly called), through group discussions and training activities got to understand the works of UNFPA in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention in adolescents. They also defined advocacy activities at various levels, developed a common theme, an 18-month plan for a pre-advocacy phase and also got a name and identity

for the initiative which is "Global Youth Partners". These young people will advocate for increased access to HIV/AIDS information, education as well as services to underserved youths at a global scope but will be defined by local actions in each country represented. This will be done by mobilizing

government officials, NGOs, religious leaders, media and other stakeholders.

The Youth Partners also engaged in social gatherings during some of the evenings. They went on a tour of New York city, and visited the UN building. The meeting was rounded off with a cultural night on the last day and a reception at the UNFPA head quarters in New York. All participants departed the next day to gather again in 9 months for the launch of the Initiative.

- Eunice Aghete

# TRUE LIFE STORY

## YOU HAVE JUST SIX MONTHS TO LIVE!

She was only 22 years old, fresh and green from a sheltered life in rural Nyeri. She landed in the glittering city of contrasts that is Nairobi, to pursue a diploma in Nursing. It wasn't long before she got caught up in the flow of the "city girl" life style which demanded that she kept up with the pace. This meant dressing in vogue, wearing make-up, hanging out in the right places and finding the means to support it all. Her cash dispenser came in the form of a man who, apart from cash also offered her love for free. But some deals come with too high a price. The price she is paying now was to come later-two weeks after a routine medical check-up at the college.

"Asunta, I'm sorry to tell you that you are HIV- positive. We can't keep you here because you are dying and you are a risk to other students". Then as if to console her, the principal of the college added. "It does not mean that you are going to die right away. You have at least six months to live".

Just like that, there was no time to prepare for the worst. No time to rearrange her face and put on a composed expression. No time to rethink the implications and quickly retract a mistake. No time to say goodbye to "normal" life. No time to see the natural end to one's dreams, no time to even afford to dream. No time to deny or accept the verdict, no time at all...

"They led me back to the dormitories. It seemed the whole college was there, staring at this strange person with AIDS. The people escorting me had protective clothing on, like those

people in the Dnmu Mabatc advert. They did not want to come closer to me. In the room, they collected my "contaminated" belongings in their gloved hands with exaggerated care and dumped them into a black polythene bag. I think they later burned them lest they spread the virus".

But the worst was yet to come. Back home, Asunta was to receive another shock. Her mother demanded payment for the school fees she had spent on her daughter. Then the discrimination began. Asunta's sister removed all her belongings from the bedroom they had always shared. When Asunta complained, her mother said she did not have any worth (since she was dying anyway) and she did not care how she slept. Her younger siblings too, regarded her with suspicion and caution. They kept a safe distance lest she infects them with the disease. She had a special room, special utensils, ate alone and hardly talked to anyone.

"I ran away from home and went back to my boyfriend, the only man I had ever known sexually, the one who infected me. I learnt that he knew all along about his status, he even went ahead and had other girlfriends. He did not want to die alone, he said. "He took me back and told me to forget about the 'lies' told to me about my status. I agreed and we started living together. Then I got pregnant and went for a routine pre-natal examination. Once again my HIV status was revealed to me. I was positive. When I told my boyfriend, he looked at me with

disdain and said: "what did you expect? You mean you did not believe it the first time?"

A completely dejected Asunta walked out of the house, never to return. He had already guaranteed her death, what else was there left to say? "He died a few years later. I knew some of the women in his life. Five have also died. There were probably more I never knew. They remain nameless and faceless although we have one thing in common we were poisoned from the same source!"

In 1996, Asunta met four women who were also HIV positive. As they encouraged each other to face the challenges of the disease, the idea came to form an organization for women in similar circumstances. Beginning with only 36 members, today, KENWA has grown to 2,430 members country - wide.

Today, Asunta is alive; infact, so alive that a stranger meeting her for the first time would find it hard to believe she is indeed HIV positive and has been for the last 14 years! Despite the fact that she was told that she had just 6 months to live when she got to know about her status.!

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

*This is an abridged story of a Kenyan woman and is an e-mail message from AIDS – Africa, a forum for communication and information on AIDS related issues in Africa.*  
(<http://www.eastandard.net/profile/featureshuman.htm>)



# RIGHTS OF A CHILD

## RIGHT TO LIFE

### Basic Principles

1. Every child has the right to life.
2. Every child has the right to survive.
3. Every child has the right to develop.
4. Every child has the right to actively participate in the promotion of his/her rights.

### What Does This Mean?

Every child has the right to life. This means no child should be deprived of life by anything that can be prevented. One common cause of childhood mortality (death) in Africa is poor health care. Thousands of children have died from diseases which could have been cured or prevented, if proper medical care was given.

The right to life also means that children should not be subjected to life threatening situations, like war. War kills and disables. War destroys families and homes. Over 20 million children all over the world lost their homes as a result of war in 1996 alone!

There are other life threatening situations which claim the lives of children, can you think of some of them?

### FACT BOX



#### The Bad News

- Between 8,000-10,000 children are killed and maimed every year by landmine explosions.
- 4 million children die needlessly every year from drinking unsafe water
- 12 million children die every year in the developing countries of diseases which could be prevented.
- Everyday 1000 children die of AIDS around the world.



#### The Good News

- 64 countries have supported the 1996 United Nations proposal to ban landmines.
- Between 1990 and 1995, UNICEF and other partners assisted almost 800 million people to gain access to safe drinking water.
- UNICEF support programmes in Africa, Asia and South Africa assist children who have lost one or both parents to AIDS.

### MESSAGE TO CHILDREN

Every child has the right to a home and family

“Could you just look after Bayo for a minute?” a very pleasant and well-dressed young lady asked Mama Ijebu, the gari trader. Before Mama Ijebu could even answer, the young woman rushed off and disappeared in the hustle and bustle of the market. Little Bayo looked at Mama Ijebu and sat down next to her table. He clutched a black plastic bag in his small hands.

Mama Ijebu began to worry when an hour passed and there was no sign of Bayo’s mother. At noon, Mama Ijebu gave little Bayo some eba and soup from her flask, but Bayo refused to eat. In fact big tears began to roll down Bayo’s cheeks, but he did not speak. By evening, when there was no sign of Bayo’s mother, Mama Ijebu was very confused. Could Bayo’s mother just have dumped such a fine little boy in the market? It seemed impossible. When she looked into the black plastic bag all her fears were confirmed, as it contained several pairs of shorts, shirts and underwear.

It was after Mama Ijebu went to the police that they discovered that Bayo could not speak. He was mute. The policeman just shook his head.

“Yes, many children with disabilities are abandoned by their parents. They end up in the police station and if no one claims them, they are sent to the State orphans’ home. If they are lucky, they are adopted. But not many people want to adopt somebody else’s problems.” A few months later, Mama Ijebu visited little Bayo at the State’s home for abandoned children. He was sitting on a small wooden chair. He looked a bit thin, but he smiled when he saw her. It was the first time Mama Ijebu had seen little Bayo smile and that smile captured Mama’s heart. “You see, he remembers me.” She spoke to the matron and was told how to apply to adopt Bayo.

“Yes, every child has the right to a home.” Mama Ijebu remarked, “Maybe I cannot adopt every child, but at least I can help this one.”

### ACTIVITIES

1. Visit the State remand home or abandoned children’s home in your area. See what the children need. Books? Clothing? Toys? Organize your friends and try



- to collect some items for these children.
2. Make “Right to Life” posters for your classroom. Choose a subject, like “Say No to Drugs” or “Clean Water Saves Lives.”

**ANY ACTIVITY WHICH IS A THREAT TO THE LIFE OR WELL-BEING OF A CHILD SHOULD BE REPORTED TO THE NEAREST ADULT IMMEDIATELY**

### Message to Government

No one has the right to subject any child to harmful traditional, social or religious practices which could affect the life of the child.

### Discussion

1. Why is the practice of child marriage wrong?
2. Can you name any harmful traditional customs which could affect the survival or development of a child?

### Message To Parents

Provide a good home for your children. Every child needs adequate food, clothing, shelter, health care, education, recreation and leisure. Be there for your children. Love them.

### Discussion

The girl in the cartoon below is begging for money to eat. Why is this a very dangerous thing to do?

Every child has the right to survive. Survival means having clean water to drink, a safe place to live, and a healthy and balanced diet. These are basic needs.



What are your chances of survival if you do not have clean water to drink? If your home is dirty? If you do not get good food to eat.

Beyond basic survival, every child has the right to develop. The home is the primary place where the child first develops. Therefore it is essential that every child has loving parents and the benefit of a sound education.

Education is the foundation of any person’s development. It is every child’s right to attend school and learn basic reading, writing and number skills. Education means growing up and learning a trade or profession so that you can be useful to yourself and your country.

Every child has the right to participate actively in the promotion of his/her rights.

This means that you have the right to speak and be listened to or to form an association to promote your rights. Of course the right to speak, does not mean you have the license to be rude!!

### ACTIVITY

Write a carefully worded letter to the Secretary General of the United Nations and tell him your concern about the millions of children who are refugees or about some other problems affecting children.

### REFERENCE:

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



## HOW HAVE YOU BENEFITTED FROM THE TEENAGE FESTIVAL OF LIFE?



The Teenage Festival of Life has helped me discover who I really am and what I really want to be. I have always wanted to be a diplomat and I was really encouraged to pursue this goal when I acted as a compere in TFL 2001. I was a very shy person and that opportunity gave me the courage to overcome my fear of making mistakes and shyness. It has also helped me impact positively on my peers through the messages I was opportuned to pass across.

**- Kingsley Imeh (19 years old)**



I served as an usher during the year 2003 Teenage Festival of Life. This enabled me develop good communication and interpersonal skills. It also helped me learn how to be patient although it was fun, it was very hectic and demanding. I can say that I am now more friendly with people and also more respectful to adults and even my peers. I remember that before the programme, we were given a set of Do's and Don'ts and this served as a guide for my behaviour on that day.

**- Tinuola Ashaolu (17 Years old)**

The TFL brought out something hidden in me, something I wasn't aware of – my ability to act! I joined the drama troupe of AHI and acted as an "AIDS Agent" which initially was a difficult role for me to play since it was a dance drama. The festival also helped me to develop enough courage

to do what I want to do. Before the festival, I couldn't dance, but I had to devote several hours for practicing before I could learn how to dance and many of my friends were quite impressed with my performance. Also in TFL 2001, I participated in the festival which was focused mainly on Mural Paintings. I drew the mural painting for my school, St. Luke's Grammar School, I painted on my school wall and this really motivated me and I have decided to study Arts and Design in the higher institution of learning.

**- Iberu Sodiq Olalekan (22 years old)**



I have benefited a lot from the TFL. Firstly, I have been able to learn more on how to stand my ground,

when making decisions especially when I'm faced with so many challenges in my bid to achieve my goal. My goal was to participate actively in the TFL and I was able to achieve this despite the numerous challenges that I faced. This had helped me to realize that it is possible for me to achieve whatever I have set out to achieve. I have also learnt how to work with other young people because I was part of the planning committee for the TFL. I also served as a compere on the day of TFL and this helped me to be able to stand and face a crowd which used to be a difficult task for me. Through the year 2003 TFL, I came to realize that it's not just adults that have the obligation of empowering youths for future challenges, but that the youths also must take it upon themselves to empower

themselves. Thus, I have learnt to become more focused as a young person.

**- Daniel Ajibade (23 years old)**



I benefited a lot from the TFL. I have been given the opportunity to show my creativity and my skills to other young

people. I acted in the drama presented by my school, Lagos City Senior College and our drama was selected as the best. This further boosted my self-confidence. I also had the opportunity to interact with my peers. I made so many friends and had fun! Another thing that the festival helped me develop was boldness. The crowd was so huge and I was initially scared that I would be too shy to talk in front of the crowd, but I'm glad that I did!

**- Tosin Bello (15 years old)**



I started participating in the TFL two years ago and it has given me the opportunity to be very creative, especially in

song writing and rendition. I was among the young people who wrote and rendered the theme song in this year's TFL and this of course also helped me develop confidence and boldness. I have also developed social skills. I can now interact better with other people because I had to learn to work with my peers during the TFL preparation.

**- Esokawu Ifeanyi (16 years old)**

# Dear Aunty

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



**I am a girl of 17 years old and I'm in SS 2, and no guy has ever asked me out or told me he loves me. Is this normal? A friend of mine told me that it is a curse. Is there anything I can do?**

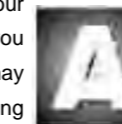
You are a very normal and healthy young person even if no guy has ever proposed to you before. You are not under any curse like your friend claims. Try as much as possible not to compare yourself to your friends. You are unique in your own way and at the right time, several guys would walk up to you. Spend this time taking care of yourself. Work on becoming an interesting person, having high self-esteem and confidence and being a good friend. Learning to be yourself, discovering your likes and dislikes, understanding your feelings and beliefs, in the long run will make you more attractive to a potential partner.



**A friend of mine is in an abusive relationship. Her boyfriend beats her all the time and she usually has bruises to prove this.**

**Although she tries very hard to cover it up but she is breaking apart. What should she do?**

You can start by talking to your friend. Let her know that you know what is going on. She may get comfort and relief knowing that someone understands what is happening and is ready to support her. Your disposition towards her as well as your support might give her the courage to face her situation. She may be in denial about the beating and react defensively toward your overtures to



acknowledge and help. That's okay and normal. It's still important to let her know that you know what's going on and that she can depend on you for help and support. When you speak with your friend, it is unrealistic to expect that she will immediately change her entire life. As outside observers, that's what we might think will happen, however, there are many more factors at play in domestic violence. Support her and tell her that you care and think she's important. Also, let her know that when she's ready, help is available. You could invite her to speak with the counsellor at the AHI youth centre.



**My vagina smells a lot and I don't know what might have caused this since I am not sexually active. What could have caused this?**

Vagina odour can be caused by several factors. First, it is important to realize that a person can have odour in the vaginal area even without having sexual intercourse. The most common cause is vaginal bacterial overgrowth known as bacterial vaginosis which has a 'fishy' smell. It can also result from vaginal infections, synthetic underwear, pantyhose and tights which do not allow air to circulate around the vulva (the outer lips of the vagina). A moist environment promotes overgrowth of normal skin bacteria that could cause vaginal odour. A physical exam by a health care provider can determine whether or not the odour is being caused by something that is treatable with medication. The physical examination can also detect other health problems that might cause unusual



body odours. Vaginal odour can also be caused by excessive sweating because it produces a moist environment.

To change vaginal odour, always wear clean underwear made from cotton materials that allows for air to circulate. Keep your vulva as dry and aired as possible because bacteria love moist, dark and trapped environments. You can also visit the AHI Youth Centre and speak with the health provider.



**Many people I've met claim that the AIDS virus is much smaller than the pores in a condom and it therefore cannot protect one against the virus. Is this true?**

Latex condoms, which are the least expensive and most accessible type of condoms at the moment, are designed so as not to allow transmission of the HIV virus. The HIV virus is larger than the pores in these condoms. Lambskin condoms on the other hand are made from sheep intestines and are now advertised as a contraceptive, but are not as effective against STD transmission. Since both user error and manufacturer error exist, condom use constitutes "safer" sex, as opposed to 100% safe sex. The only 100% safe sex is abstinence. Tips for using condoms to ensure greater effectiveness in protecting against both pregnancy and HIV and other STDs include storing condom in a cool, dry place and keeping away from direct sunlight, and using them before their expiration date.



### REFERENCE:

*The "Go Ask Alice" Book of Answers - Columbia, University Health Education Programme.*



# THE AHI YOUTH SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Many young people in Nigeria are among the millions all over the world who are faced with the challenges of making informed decisions and leading productive lives in an environment which does very little to encourage them and sharpen their potentials. One of the major challenges that has posed a big threat to young people's growth and development has been poverty and lack of opportunities for youth participation in development activities. This has made a lot of young people to engage in risky behaviour and practices to the detriment of their health and future development.

In view of these staggering realities, Action Health Incorporated initiated the youths skills development programme in 1993 to engage youths between ages 16 and 19 to undergo a one-year internship programme during which they work at AHI as Youth Programme Assistants. The "Youth Skills Development Programme" was redesigned and made more comprehensive in 1999 to provide young people with opportunities to develop competencies/skills that would help them become healthy and responsible youths transforming to adults. Specifically, the goal is to help them develop themselves in core competencies such as creative, personal, cognitive, civic, physical and mental health and employment competency. Other objectives of the programme are to develop a corps of youths who will influence their peers positively and develop leadership skills. It is also aimed at equipping participants for future developmental challenges by training them to take charge of their lives and helping them gain a proper understanding of their reproductive health and rights.

Over the past 5 years, AHI has trained and employed several young people to participate and utilize some of the opportunities provided through the Youth Skills Development Programme. Some of the skills the young people acquired include microcomputer operations, office administration, vocational training, public speaking, personal health management and knowledge, reasoning and creativity.

## WHO PARTICIPATES IN THE PROGRAMME?

The scheme is designed particularly for young people who have passed the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations and are only waiting to go on to higher institution of learning. Thus, an applicant must possess the basic entry requirements for a higher institution in Nigeria, which is a minimum of 5 credits including English Language and Mathematics.

## RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The recruitment process for the Youth Skills Development Programme starts as early as September of every year and participants are expected to resume duty in January of the following year. The participants serve as interns for a period of one calendar year during which they are expected to gain an optimum understanding of the organization's programmes and a broader knowledge of the various issues dealt with in the different departments of the organisation. To achieve this, each youth assistant (as they are fondly referred to in the organisation) is attached to a particular department based on their individual interests and identified

talents. However, each participant is expected to work within the various departments of the organisation and spend a minimum of 1 month in each of these departments.

## CORE COMPETENCIES LEARNT DURING THE PROGRAMME

### Creative Competency

Creative competency applies to the exploration and development of self-expression. During the one-year internship, the Youth Programme Assistants have various opportunities to express themselves through acting, music, dancing and writing. They produce drama skits on a variety of issues of interest, and are encouraged to try their hands at writing participatory drama scripts for acting, as well as reports and articles for publication.

### Personal Competency

Personal competency applies to actions that reflect the understanding of one's own opinions and thoughts and those of others in order to handle situations appropriately and non-violently. Being actively involved in the different programme activities of the organization, the youth assistants have a chance to develop interpersonal skills, because they are required to relate well with young people and adult guests who visit the centre. A youth assistant is the first person that welcomes guests to the centre and takes guests on a guided tour of AHI youth centre facilities. They develop the ability to listen to others' opinions and thoughts, as well as articulate their own views through their participation at staff meetings and while co-facilitating educational sessions. Some of the challenges they face include respecting people's opinions and views, cultural orientation and religious biases even if they don't necessarily agree with them. They also learn to respond to youth centre clients in a non-judgmental way and develop good listening skills in the

course of their work. Working with adults who encourage them to take decisions and accept responsibility for their actions is an aspect of the programme they usually find challenging.

### Cognitive Competency

This refers to intellectual development and the integration of information into operational functions. During the internship programme, the young people are exposed to series of training workshops and seminars that not only enhance their information and knowledge base, but also give them the leverage needed to realize their personal educational goals. On their first day at work, each youth assistant writes his/her goals and expectations for the one-year programme, and their duties and responsibilities are tailored/organized towards achieving these goals. For example, those interested in a career in Mass Communication, work in the IEC/Outreach Unit, those interested in medical field work in the Health Services Unit and those interested in Business Administration works in the Administrative Unit.

The young people develop report writing skills through the use of reporting format and participate in training programmes

within and outside the organization. Some of the training areas include Comprehensive Sexuality Education, Time Management, Leadership Skills, Security Skills and Communication Skills.

### Civic Competency

Civic competency applies to a sense of respect and value for the civil and human rights of oneself and others and the recognition that one can promote these rights for oneself and one's community by participating in the governmental process and community services.

All Youth Assistants participate in community services such as education, counselling and meetings with people within and outside the organization. They participate in rallies and human rights activities conducted by other organizations and are involved in AHI's policy decisions on issues affecting young people before embarking on programmes and activities aimed at addressing the issues. They are also involved in programme design and implementation.

### Physical And Mental Health Competency

This refers to the ability to maintain one's well-being and identify, understand and practice healthy behaviours. Through the various IEC programme activities, the youth assistants are exposed to resources on healthy sexual development, good nutrition and physical exercise. They also have a chance to acquire appropriate health-seeking behaviour and develop skills to take care of themselves.

Mental health competency applies to the ability to identify, understand and deal with one's emotions and feelings. The youth assistants work in a youth-friendly environment, which operates a policy of encouraging open lines of communication. In addition to being attached to an adult Programme Staff including the Executive Director. These open channels of communication makes it easy for them to share personal concerns, challenges or conflicts at work when these arise, and to have them resolved in good time. They also have access to the health facilities provided by the organization and discuss with the counsellor at the youth-friendly clinic when necessary.

### Employment Competency

Employment competency applies to vocational awareness based upon analysis of current labour market and work place conditions; they are not prescriptive judgments.

## THE 2003 PROGRAMME BENEFICIARIES

The 12-month period of the programme proved to be rewarding as attested to by the young people who participated in the youth skills development programme (YSDP) during the year.

### MAUREEN ESOKAWU

Maureen Esokawu is one of the young people that participated in this year's YSDP. Known for her dimpled smile and cheerful demeanour, Maureen says that she was motivated to participate in the Youth Skills Development Programme due to the fact that she loves facing challenges. She says "ever since I was in college, I had always taken it upon myself to educate my peers and I was able to do this by participating in the Health and Life Planning Club activities. When I was selected as one of the beneficiaries of the programme, I was very excited because I believed it was going to be an eye opener. I was not disappointed.



Through my participation, I've been able to learn about issues on reproductive health of young people. This has in turn helped me to educate my peers as well as improve myself. My friendly attitude endeared many of the facility users to me and they get comfortable sharing their concerns with me".

Maureen also believes that the programme has helped her to become more responsible. "Whenever I did something naughty, my dad will say to me "remember you are a Peer Educator". These made me sit up and made me conscious of the fact that people are watching and are learning from the things I do. This geared me towards self-improvement and I read so many books in the library. Also, I used to be a very forgetful person and initially, many of the adults I worked with complained. However, I learnt to overcome this challenge by writing down jobs assigned to me. My work in the library really helped to improve my writing skills through the many books I read. Report writing was also



Maureen educating young people at the AHI youth clinic encouraged and this further improved my writing skills".

Did she face any challenges? "Certainly!" she retorts. "Working with adults has been very challenging because I had to meet up with so many expectations and duties given to me. However, over time, I learnt to work with these adults and tried as much as possible to meet up with deadlines. This has improved my interpersonal skills and competencies.

I am now so confident that I can work with adults anywhere I can confidently say that I am different from my peers through the unique opportunity provided by the programme. I was also exposed to a lot of training experiences within and outside Lagos which further broadened my horizon on adolescent sexual and reproductive health issues".

### TENNY TUNKARIMU

"My one-year work experience at AHI has been rewarding!" These are the words of Tenny Tunkarimu, a beneficiary of this year's YSDP. Tenny says that she faced so many challenges which helped her to be productive even when it was difficult to do so. Hear her – "My first few weeks at AHI were very hectic because I had to learn to wake up early which was something I was not used to. However, I learnt to wake up early each morning and get to work early. Although my primary place of assignment was the Advocacy Unit, I was opportuned to work in other Units such as the Health Services, IEC, Library and Admin Unit. In each of these Units, there was always



something new to learn and new skills to acquire. For instance, I had to work at the reception for a period of time and my patience was tried by many of the facility users. I had no choice than





Tenny at work writing a report of an outreach programme

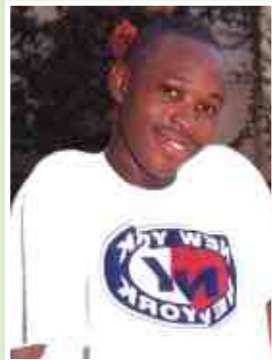
to be patient and friendly since I had to portray a good image of the organization". Tenny also says that her experiences have provided benefits which even transcends the organisation. "My relationship with my parents and friends has also improved. Many of my friends see me as their role model and seek my advice on issues bothering them. I have learnt about how to deal and relate with young people. My perspective of several things have really changed. I used to think that working and earning money was easy but when I started working, I began to appreciate my parents for being conservative and wise in their spending. AHI is truly a place to be, where your eyes would be opened to see exactly what life is all about. There were so many skills to learn! I am particularly glad that I acquired writing skills. Before participating in the programme, I hated writing but I was forced to develop a flair for writing when I was made one of the contributing writers of the Growing Up newsletter.

A very dynamic and active person, Tenny says that working in AHI has made her smart, bold and courageous, as she participated and organized several programmes which helped improve her self-confidence. "Many of the adults I worked with really encouraged me. I used to feel that adults were very mean but working in AHI has helped me correct this misconception". Her concluding words "Working in AHI is a wonderful experience and a great honour for me because each time people ask after me at home, the reply they get is "she has gone to work" and they marvel that I am engaged in such productive activity at my age. Many parents have encouraged their children and wards to be involved in productive activities because they are challenged by what I do! I also learnt a lot during my trip to India. It was indeed a golden opportunity provided by AHI"

**OLUWASEUN JAWANDO**

An ex-president of the Health and Life Planning Club of Baptist Academy,

Seun Jawando was excited to be one of the young people selected to participate in the Youth Skills Development Programme. "I was so happy when I got my letter of appointment. I knew it was an opportunity to learn more about health issues. Working in the various Units has helped me acquire diverse skills. I am especially glad that I acquired micro computer skills and can now use different packages on the computer. My communication skills have also greatly improved. I was able to learn telephone etiquette in the admin unit where I had to make and receive calls frequently. Interacting with different young people with diverse needs really helped me improve my interpersonal skills. Another part of my job which I found tasking but enlightening was the dispatch of mails to facility users. This really helped me know so many places in Lagos. I believe it is impossible for me to get lost! Seun says that one challenge he faced while working was that of winning the confidence of the various youths that visited the centre. "When I worked in the clinic, I had to learn to win the trust and confidence of my peers. I developed the ability to keep things confidential". Seun was also exposed through the several programmes he participated in outside the organization.



During the one-year programme, I had the opportunity to participate in round-table discussions with other young people from different NGOs. Such programmes include the round-table discussion of Ford Foundation where I was opportuned to meet the Vice-President of the Ford Foundation. I also attended the Celebration of Professional



Seun attending to young people at the AHI reception

Excellence for Dr. F. Oditah, a member of the Queen's Council. Another of such programmes was the "Save the Children" workshop in Kaduna".

In conclusion, he says "This programme has served as a stepping stone to attaining greater heights and has made me more determined in attaining my goals".

**ABIMBOLA JOGBENU**

"I got to know about AHI through my sister who happens to be a past trained peer educator. When I was in secondary school, I didn't have the opportunity to participate in HLPC activities because I had to attend Jets Club Meetings whose activities coincided with the HLPC. Thus, this programme has served as an avenue to acquire so many skills and obtain information which otherwise I might not have acquired". Those are the words of Abimbola Jogbenu, a beneficiary of the Youth Skills Development Programme. 'Bimbo' as she is fondly called started participating in AHI activities when she registered for the computer-trainin programme organized by AHI. Her experiences during this programme encouraged her to apply for the Youth Skills Development Programme. "My first place of duty was



the Resource & Documentation Unit (Library) where I learnt about human relations by attending to facility users. I also became familiar with my other responsibilities such as giving useful resource materials to researchers and students, typing of abstracts and book keeping. Working in the clinic has really motivated me. The different health issues I learnt had further encouraged me in my aspiration to become a Pharmacist. I have become very friendly and accommodating. I used to be an extremely shy person, but working in AHI has enabled me gain a greater degree of self-confidence.

Bimbo attests that the Youth Skills Development Programme has empowered her in every area of her life. "I have learnt communication, interpersonal and life planning skills. There is something new to learn in



Bimbo attending to some young researchers

every Unit, even in the reception where I am currently working. "I have greatly improved my typing skills and interpersonal skills since I have to attend to students and adults who visit the youth centre on a daily basis". Bimbo believes that the Youth Skills Development Programme provides participants with unique opportunities geared towards building their competencies. She says, "I was involved in the exchange programme organized by CREA (Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action) which held in India. It was an interesting programme which has broadened my knowledge. I feel better equipped to help create awareness among my peers.

Does she have future plans? "Definitely" She is quick to reply. "Many people believe that when you start working at a young age, you won't have time to think about furthering your education, but the opposite is true in AHI! I have been challenged to pursue my goals with much more vigor and enthusiasm and by next year, I would be studying Science Laboratory Technology in Yaba College of Technology before proceeding to the university to study Pharmacy" she says confidently.

**EUNICE EVANS AGHETE**

Eunice Aghete is one young person who feels more confident and ready to face whatever challenges life might present her after participating in the YSDP. "As a young person, I have always had aspirations. I have so many things I want to accomplish during my life time and participating in the YSDP has made me realize that I can accomplish whatever I want to accomplish! This is because from the first day I started working in AHI, I had many aspirations, some of which seemed impossible to achieve. However, over the course of the 12 months duration, I was able to accomplish them and even more! My self-esteem has improved tremendously!" One thing Eunice can attest to is that the programme helped improve her communication skills. "I can now talk to adults more freely,

something I was never able to do well before. My relationship with my parents has also improved in the sense that I now understand the pressures involved in working and so I understand how my parents feel after a hard day's work! I attended so many programmes from press conferences to teens' day celebrations and this further improved my self-esteem. I even had



the opportunity to represent Nigeria in New York at the Global Youth Partners meeting and it was such a great experience for me!" Eunice's wish after participating in the Youth Skills Development Programme is that many young people in Nigeria could have the opportunity to participate in such a programme. Why? "I have come to realize that I have a role to play in improving my life, the lives of others and the country in general, and I have also come to realize that every young person regardless of their background or gender have equal competencies and should be provided with equal opportunities to learn and acquire skills which would enable them develop themselves, just as I have" she responds.



Eunice educating young people during the IEC session

child. Another interesting activity was the ladder of children's participation and a presentation focused on the "Get Global method" which is a framework for working with children and young people. Two youth staff attended the programme from Action Health Incorporated, Miss Maureen and Mr. Seun Jawando.

**WORKSHOP ON TACKLING DIVERSITY**

A three-day workshop was organized by the Save The Children UK in Kaduna from 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> November 2003 with the aim to train participants who came for the programme on creative skills while working with children and young people for the purpose of their empowerment and rights. The objectives of the workshop were to develop a clear understanding of diversity in Nigeria, to explore the "Get Global" Method as a framework of working with children and young people, and developing and sharing solutions to potential objectives in the work. In developing a clear understanding of diversity in Nigeria, Mr. Ben the Chief Programme Officer to Save the Children UK, explained how children should be part of making decisions and how their rights are violated. There was a presentation on the triangle of rights, which illustrated the rights of a child and illustrated how any action taken on behalf of a child should be in the best interest of a



Group discussion during the workshop "Save the Children"



# CAREER GUIDE

## DO YOU WANT TO BE A PHARMACIST?

Pharmacy is concerned with drugs and their formulation into medicines. "Who is a Pharmacist?" The pharmacist is basically a specialist in the science of drugs and by training, he/she is an expert on drug products and their application in healthy and disease states, hence the pharmacist understands the activity of drugs in the normal healthy body as well as the person that is ill. He/she therefore understands the composition of drugs, its physical and chemical properties, interactions, manufacture of drug products, procurement, distribution and uses. In addition to dispensing medication and health supplies, he also serves his community as a source of drug information; therefore prescribers of medicine should rely on the pharmacists for information about various drugs, their availability, activity, adverse reaction and other precautions to be observed with particular drug product. The pharmacist is therefore a very valuable member of the health team. Pharmacists dispense medicines in accordance with a written prescription from a doctor, dentist, or other qualified person. The formulation and dispensing of medicines requires a detailed understanding of the chemical structure and properties of drugs, and their effects on the human body. Pharmacists also advise doctors and other health practitioners on the selection, dosage, performance, and side-effects of medicines.

### TRAINING

For an individual considering pharmacy profession as a life career, he or she must be science oriented. Pharmacists are presently being trained in seven Nigerian Universities. The Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) is responsible for the admission of students into these institutions. The mode of admission is either through entry into preliminary (Prelim, 100 levels) through JAMB – (UME) or direct entry (200 levels).

### Admission Into Preliminary Year (Prelim 100 Level)

Admission into the preliminary year requires the candidate to take the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) examination which is usually advertised in the Nigerian dailies at the appropriate time. A prospective candidate

should have passed with credit in English Language, Mathematics, Chemistry, Biology and Physics at either the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary level or Senior Secondary School Certificate (SSCE), or NECO before placement at the University can be confirmed.

The JAMB examination is highly competitive and whether a candidate is admitted or not depends on his/her aggregate score. The entry into pharmacy institution is very competitive and therefore the "cut-off" mark varies from University to University. The University of Zaria admits students into preliminary class through its own School of Basic Studies.

### Admission By Direct Entry (200 Level)

To be admitted through the direct entry into 200 level, the candidate must possess the High School Certificate in Chemistry, Physics, Biology, or Botany and Zoology if separate. These are in addition to having fulfilled the other requirements for candidate seeking admission into the preliminary year. Holders of first degree in the relevant Sciences may also apply to JAMB for direct admission. Guidelines for admission into any of the Faculties/School of Pharmacy in Nigeria can be found in the JAMB brochure.

### Registration of Pharmacists in Nigeria

In line with part IV Section 10 of the Pharmacists Council of Nigeria Decree 91 of 1992, the name of a person who has undergone an approved course of study with a B.Pharm Degree in Pharmacy from an accredited University must be on the Council's Register. Such registration must be in two categories: provisional or full registration.

### Provisional Registration (Registration as a Pupil Pharmacist)

This category of registration is for the fresh Bachelors of Pharmacy graduates who just finished from approved Faculty of Pharmacy by the Pharmacist Council of Nigeria. They are expected to fill the form 'F' which entitles their names to be

in the Council's Provisional Register.

On submission of a completed form 'F' with photocopies of relevant certificates, a bank draft with prescribed fees and an Oath Certificate addressed to the Council, the fresh pharmacy graduate becomes entitled to practice as Pupil Pharmacist, which infact is the period of internship training programme. The period of internship is (12) twelve calendar months. It should be noted that the fresh pharmacist can only proceed for the National Youth Service Corps Programme on satisfactory completion of the internship programme under the supervision of a registered pharmacist.

### Full Registration of Pharmacists

A person can only apply for full registration on completion of internship training programme. Such person would have been issued a Certificate of Experience by the supervising pharmacist. The provision of this registration enables the person to practice and hold appointment as a pharmacist in Nigeria. It should be noted that after the National Youth Service Corps Programme, every practicing pharmacist is required to pay annually a

**Skills and Personal Qualities**



- Accuracy
- Attention to detail
- Business Sense
- Communication Skills
- Computer Skills
- Decision Making Ability
- Logic
- Good with People
- Manual Dexterity
- Methodical Approach
- Normal Colour Vision
- Numeracy
- Patience
- Sensitivity
- Tact
- Teamwork
- Technical/Scientific Ability

prescribed fee accompanied with form 'J' to the Pharmacists Council of Nigeria. This entitles their names to be retained on the Council's register.

### THE JOB

Professional pharmacists normally concentrate in one of the three main areas of activity: community or retail, hospital, or industrial pharmacy. Many community and hospital pharmacies are open long hours, or around the clock, so pharmacists may work a rota of evenings, nights, weekends, and holidays. Some pharmacists work only part-time. Pharmacists usually work in clean, well-lit, and well-ventilated areas surrounded by hundreds of drugs. They may wear gloves and masks when handling sterile or harmful substances.

The work can be very tiring and pressurized and pharmacists spend most of their time on their feet. Pharmacists may have to cope with the sight of blood.

### PROSPECTS/OUTLOOK

Job prospects for pharmacists are likely to be excellent in most countries with increasing numbers of opportunities. This is due to a number of factors. Scientific advances are likely to make more drugs available for the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases. A rapidly growing elderly population will also need an ever-increasing number of pharmaceutical prescriptions, both for the prevention and treatment of disease. Hospital

pharmacists are likely to have more patient contact. There are many different areas of specialization and also good opportunities for becoming self-employed.

Most pharmacists work in retail or community pharmacies. Some of these pharmacists are salaried employees, while others are self-employed and run their own pharmacies. A sizable number of pharmacists work in hospitals and health care facilities or with pharmaceutical companies making medicines. A few pharmacists work for food-production or chemical companies. Some work in universities and research institutes. Government agencies employ some pharmacists as drug inspectors. Other pharmacists write or edit reports for journals, draft technical papers, or work in advertising, law, or patent work. There are opportunities to work abroad. Within the health service there is usually a recognized, structured promotions ladder for those with the right qualifications, length of experience, and ability. Job promotion may lead wither to further specialization or into management.

Pharmacists employed by pharmaceutical companies may obtain more responsible posts once they have the necessary experience and can prove their value to their employers. Pharmacists in industry can advance via research, quality

control, management, production, packaging, or sales posts.

On the retail side there are good promotion prospects into management with the larger groups of chemists. Many pharmacists who start by working for other people may purchase a pharmacy of their own.

### QUALIFICATIONS

Useful subjects include Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and English Language. The practice of pharmacy is a vital part of total health care delivery. Such factors as increased life expectancy; greater demand for therapeutic agents and the increasing population have expanded the need for pharmacists. Today in Nigeria, we have only 7,000 pharmacists as against a population of over 100 million. To meet the personnel needs and the demand for pharmaceutical services, the Pharmacy profession is seeking students from our society. The challenge to you all is that if you wish to play a vital role in our health care delivery services and at the same time derive satisfaction, then you should seriously consider a career in the pharmacy profession.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, you can contact: The Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (Lagos State Branch), Olatunji House, Idi-Iroko Bus-Stop, Maryland, Lagos.

### REFERENCE:

Career Guidance For Nigerian Students - Omoegun Mopelola & Buraimoh Benjamin. 2001.

## PROFILE OF A ROLE MODEL



Mr. Chukuwdi Obiukwu is the Managing Director of Pharm Affairs Nigeria Limited situated at Anthony Village, Lagos. A pharmacist by profession, Mr. Obiukwu started his education at St.

John's Primary School, Onitsha after which he went to the Merchants of Light Secondary School, Oba, Onitsha. Mr. Obiukwu had his university education at the University of Nigeria Nsukka where he obtained a Bachelors Degree in Pharmacy.

Born over 40 years ago, Mr. Obiukwu says that he had no role models while growing up. When asked why, he said that whilst

growing up, he saw many adults and grown-ups do exactly those things which they had advised young people not to do. This, he says, posed a great challenge to him and as such he decided not to look up to anybody since he had learnt from experience that nobody is perfect, adults inclusive.

Mr. Obiukwu says that anyone aspiring to be a pharmacist must be disciplined, focused and hardworking. Alongside these qualities, the person must have credits in English language, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology at one sitting from WAEC or its equivalent. After graduation, the person can join professional bodies such as the International Pharmaceutical Federation (IPF), Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) and National Association of Community Pharmacists (NACP). Mr.

Obiukwu is quick to tell anyone who wants to be a pharmacist to go ahead and pursue a career in it because such a person has tremendous opportunities to succeed in community practice, industries, hospitals and even the civil services. "As youths, you have tremendous opportunities to make your future a happy and fulfilled one, provided you clearly determine what exactly you want out of life. Work hard and keep pursuing that dream for it will surely come to pass" Mr. Obiukwu enthusiastically retorts when he's asked what his advice to the youth is. He believes that every young person has the ability to achieve whatever he/she wants to achieve and that young people aspiring to go into this profession should never be discouraged while trying to do so. In his words, "Along the path of life, you will be tempted to be impatient, lose hope, cheat or cut corners, but let it be known to you that man is a product of the choices he makes!"