



**ACADEMY FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT,
ILE-IFE, OSUN STATE, NIGERIA**

**COMMUNITY
DIALOGUE ON**



**GENDER NORMS AND SEXUAL
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH
OF ADOLESCENTS**

Starting Right at School (StaRS) Project

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

ABOUT Academy for Health Development

Academy for Health Development (AHEAD) is a not-for-profit research and knowledge management and health development organization which seeks to improve health systems and health development through generating new knowledge, building capacity for research and action, and translating knowledge into effective policies and programmes.

AHEAD has become increasingly known at both national and international levels, and have delivered successfully on several projects in her area of core competencies, which are; training and capacity development; research (epidemiologic, operations, translational and implementation); health programme management (both community-based and clinical preventive interventions), and evidence-based policy development and advocacy. A few of her past projects include the World Health Organization's Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents (AA-HA!) Framework, USAID's OVC MER Outcome Monitoring in Nigeria.

STARTING RIGHT AT SCHOOL (StaRS) PROJECT: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Academy for Health Development brought together stakeholders from the three intervention schools in Osun State where the Starting Right at Schools Project funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is on-going. This community dialogue meeting which ran for three days was to discuss some of the gender socialization and reproductive health issues that have been uncovered in their schools in the course of the study. The students from these schools, using photovoice as a tool had beforehand taken pictures that depict issues surrounding gender socialization and gender norms that they identified in their schools and communities. These pictures were then displayed and presented by the students at the community dialogue.

The Community dialogue was opened by the

Permanent Secretary of State Universal Basic Education Board,

represented by the Osun State Middle Schools Director, Mrs A. K. Oladimeji who thanked AHEAD for



the initiative. She reminded teachers that a lot of students have more belief in them than in their parents and that even though gender roles are mostly determined by culture, parents and religions, the negative ones need to be rectified.



AHEAD gave a presentation on the objectives of the study and the different

stages of the project. The community dialogue signified the end of the first stage, which was the Baseline stage and would be followed by the Implementation and the Endline stages.



Prof. Olawunmi Fatusi, Vice President, AHEAD Nigeria

This was followed by a presentation by the

students, explaining the photos they had taken; the pictures were grouped into five thematic areas:

Water and Sanitation Hygiene (WASH), which included pictures of unsanitary toilets and environments, (see figure 1 below)



Violence and Bullying which showed images of boys bullying their male and female colleagues.

(see diagram 2 below)



Safe Environment and Gender Equality

which depicted images of boys at play while girls were given chores, (see diagram 3 below)



Gender Sexuality showing segregation of male and female students in the class and at play (see diagram 4 below)



Days 2 and 3 were aimed at developing interventions; Dr Obioma Uchendu of the Inspire Network gave an insightful presentation on violence in children and adolescents and shared the seven inspire strategies for addressing this problem.



Following this, Dr Dele Bello, the assistant Director of Programmes at AHEAD gave a presentation on identifying and promoting the opportunities that exist for the fostering of gender equity in schools using the Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS) as a reference.



Stakeholders were grouped according to the schools they represented and they discussed and outlined the gender socialization challenges faced by their schools in order of priority; they also shared their visions for the schools and designed a road map tailored after evidence-based strategies for gender-socialization for the realization of the visions shared.



Below is a summary of the presentations given by the three groups and the schools affected by them.

CHALLENGES	VISION	ROAD-MAP	SCHOOLS CONCERNED
1. Lack of proper waste disposal mechanism; Lack of constant running water and bad plumbing.	Provision of general WASH facilities.	Repair of water and sanitation facilities and provision of constant running water; Re-digging and maintenance of the existing wells; Inclusion of handwashing education into the gender meeting.	Anglican Central School, St Stephen's Government Middle School, Oranmiyan Government Middle School
2. Inadequate barricades to avoid accidents during play and potential suicide attempts.		Repair of the school field and excavation of stones and dangerous materials around the play area	Anglican Central School, St Stephen's Government Middle School.
3. Bullying and violence	An environment free of bullying.	1. Education on safe play and appointment of bullying guards to be on the lookout for incidences 2. Provision of teaching aids like posters that speak on the dangers of violence and bullying. 3. An empowered Guidance and Counselling should be put in place. 4. Establishment of educative and academic clubs.	Anglican Central School, St Stephen's Gov't Middle School Oranmiyan Government Middle School
4. Dominance of boys in sports.		Forming of female teams and provision of sports materials for the teams.	St. Stephen's Gov't Middle School
5. Use of substances among the male students	Enforcing laws that prevent drug use and abuse	Education and sensitization of parents and students on the dangers of these substances; Use of posters warning against the use of drugs.	Oranmiyan Government Middle School
6. Watching of Pornography		Laws that ban and punish the use of cell phones in schools should be constituted.	St Stephen's Gov't Middle School

CHALLENGES	VISION	ROAD-MAP	SCHOOLS CONCERNED
7. Inadequate knowledge on menstrual hygiene among girls.		Orientation/talks for female students on menstrual hygiene.	St Stephen's Gov't Middle School
8. Hoodlums and outsiders breaking into the school to rob students and teachers.	A safe and secure school environment.	School security and set rules to keep students playing within the school to promote safety; Inclusion of practical lessons on vigilance into the school security education curriculum.	Oranmiyan Government Middle School
9. Male and female students stand apart on the assembly, sit apart in the class and don't play together.	A school where boys and girls see themselves as equals.	Teachers should ensure students' sitting arrangement is mixed; Students should be taught the importance of relating with one another; Sensitization of parents on the importance of healthy socialization among the students.	St Stephen's Gov't Middle School, Oranmiyan Government Middle School
10. Boys feel superior to girls when it comes to minimal chores.	A school where boys and girls see themselves as equals.	Building the self-esteem of all students by inviting professionals to deliver career talks; Boys should be taught to respect girls at the gender meetings.	Oranmiyan Government Middle School
11. Use of substances among the male students.		Education and sensitization of parents and students on the dangers of these substances.	Oranmiyan Government Middle School
12. Students bringing charms to school.		Parent enlightenment at PTA meetings and involvement of law enforcement agents.	St Stephen's Government Middle School

The community dialogue was brought to an end by the Vice-President of AHEAD, Prof Olawunmi Fatusi who in her Vote of Thanks expressed her gratitude to the Permanent Secretary of Education in the state, the Director



of SUBEB, the teachers, students, parents and

all present for their time and input in ensuring the success of the programme. She reminded stakeholders that because resources were not unlimited, it was important for solutions selected for implementation to be low-cost and sustainable.

We are moving to the second phase of the StaRS Project; the implementation phase. This will consist of the collaboration of the AHEAD and the school stakeholders to judiciously and effectively channel the funds into selected appropriate and sustainable interventions. Implementation will run for about 6 months after which the endline phase of the project will commence and there would be a post-implementation analysis of the project, its impact and recommendations on sustainability and future projects.

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE EVENT



GET IN TOUCH

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