

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

"towards an empowered womanhood"

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

GPI

at

10

**A DECADE OF ROSES,
THORNS AND CHANGE**

(1994-2004)

- Achieving Gender Equality in Nigeria



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Towards an Empowered Womanhood

GPI at 10

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THORNS AND CHANGE**

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GPI AT 10

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Declaration

“Governments, in collaboration with NGOs are urged to meet the special needs of adolescents and to establish appropriate programmes to respond to those needs... such programmes should provide information to adolescents and make a conscious effort to strengthen positive social and cultural values.

“Sexually active adolescents will require special family planning information, counselling and services and those who become pregnant will require special support from their families and community during pregnancy and early childcare. Adolescents must be fully involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of such information and services with proper regard for parental guidance and responsibilities.”

Programme of Action, POA, of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), Paragraph 7:47
(Cairo, 1994)

Dedication

We dedicate this publication to:

- The innocent Nigerian adolescent girls and women who have been traumatised by gender-based violence
- The memory of numerous Nigerian girls and women who have lost their lives to complications of unsafe abortion
- Nigerian girls and women who have been rendered infertile through infection from Harmful Traditional Practices and as a result of ignorance and gender discrimination
- All Nigerian females for their long years of suffering from patriarchal discriminatory gender roles
- All Nigerian girls and women whose dream of rising above the low status got short-circuited through teenage pregnancy out of ignorance
- All female victims of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria
- All GPI girls, past and present for courage, empowerment, safety and pleasurable sexuality

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Girls' Power Initiative is grateful to all the adolescent girls who have placed their trust and steadfastness in what we do. They keep making us relevant and important. Without them, and the challenges they face, the creation, existence and programme implementation of GPI would have been irrelevant.

In similar manner, we sincerely appreciate the support of parents of GPI girls, past and present, who, in spite of the social myths, misconceptions, prejudices and distortions against GPI programmes, continue, not only to have confidence in GPI to send their wards, but have become and remained strong advocates of GPI, thus helping us grow from strength to strength.

Bene Madunagu and Grace Osakue co-founded GPI and have continued to co-ordinate GPI programmes. However, the progress and achievements of GPI would not have reached what it is today without teamwork and contribution of our staff - programme and support staff - past and present. We sincerely commend their ability to fit into a programme like GPI's, with the challenges posed in the execution of such programmes. In particular, two staff, Eka Bassey in Calabar and Fatima Ikoghode-Aikpitanyi, now in GPI Asaba Centre, have been in GPI from the start of our regular lessons since 1994. We sincerely appreciate their faith in, and commitment to GPI.

We have utilised much resources in terms of materi-

als and finances as well as technical support to be where we are, 10 years after the commencement of GPI regular programmes. We are very grateful to our collaborators for their invaluable contribution of resources, financial, material and technical support that have made it possible for us to sustain programme activities. In particular we would like to mention the Ford Foundation, the International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC), the MacArthur Foundation, NOVIB and Equality Now, for the various levels of support we have received from each of them.

We are also grateful to our board members for their collective wisdom, effective policies, supervision, monitoring, support and guidance to the executive board in the co-ordination of programmes of GPI.

We remain grateful to our numerous local donors for their support and assistance in kind and in cash. Many supporters and well-wishers have also donated books to us, especially the Calabar International Institute for Research, Information and Documentation (CIINSTRID). More than 70% of the books in our resource centre which provide intellectual service to our girls, staff and the public are donations from IWHC, particularly through Andrea Irvin, the programme officer in IWHC when GPI first started. We sincerely thank the management of our outreach schools for their support.

We also thank other numerous organisations and individuals who have trusted and encouraged us in our work on youth development. Our thanks also go to the team of our dedicated consultants who have always promptly re-

sponded to our calls in various areas of our activities. We have key supporters in the print and electronic media. We thank them all, particularly Rose Ojiji of Cross River Broadcasting Corporation, (TV), Increase Abasi-Ubong of *Nigerian Tribune*, Kunle Johnson of *Comet*, Vitalis Ugoh of *New Nigerian* and Jude Okwe of *New Age*, all of the Nigeria Union of Journalists correspondence chapel in Calabar.

Lastly, we in GPI are grateful to the state governments in Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Delta, and Edo states for their liberal attitude that has created the enabling environment for GPI to carry out activities in and out of schools in the four states. This is so, even when some state authorities frowned at the term “sexuality education,” in spite of the fact that the Nigerian government in response to the negative and oftentimes fatal consequences of challenges adolescents face with growing up, ignorant about their human sexuality issues, gave approval to the National Sexuality Education Curriculum, since 2001.

Foreword

I am privileged to have the opportunity to write this foreword on the first decade of Girls' Power Initiative, GPI activities. This privilege has raised many questions in my mind: since the issues relate mostly to gender opportunities and how women as a category have been short-changed, would it be better to have a woman - who feels the pain and lives the experience - do it? If I was chosen because of the sociology background, why would GPI search so far afield when there are eminent sociologists in its own backyard? In the end, I accepted the honour because of my own conviction about the situation of women in Nigeria and the need to change things for the better. Besides, as a member of GPI's Board of Trustees, I have known enough about the organization to introduce it to the public.

Nigeria is a society where the prevailing nature of gender relations and enormous disadvantages women suffer have become matter-of-course and so normal as to be accepted as natural. Irrespective cultural differences between the various 373 or so ethnic groups in the country, the low status of women and associated lower opportunities seem to be common denominators. This comes through in the home where the girl-child is mandated to help the mother in the kitchen while the boy her age or older is allowed to play football with his friends. Thus, from this young age the two are socialized differently about their roles and responsibilities in the home. The disadvantage that starts in the home is carried to public spaces and places. Thus, in

an era of democracy and electioneering, female contestants are few and far between. Often, those who brave the odds to contest are advised to step down for the male candidates and when they insist the strategy changes to name-calling. Furthermore, when political rallies are held the audience is harangued by male speakers, often several of them, who want to sell the party or a particular candidate to the electorate. Women politicians seldom have this privilege. Instead, their contribution to rallies is reduced to singing and dancing and to preparing and serving snacks and drinks for the occasion.

The situation in other public places is similar. Look around the civil service in all the local government councils, the states of the federation, federal civil service, the armed forces and you will appreciate the enormous underrepresentation of women. This situation relates to the nature of opportunities which women were earlier denied. Without the benefit of education fewer women have the necessary skills to be employed. While school enrolment has generally improved there are still wide disparities between male and female in certain regions. In some of the Northern states, the ratio is up to 1:5 in many schools. Worse still, the few sent to school might be withdrawn for early marriage. In some cases, the marriage might be to raise money for the training of the brother or even to bolster the family's food security. In the Eastern states, there is a reversal in which the boys "learn work" or understudy to become future businessmen in retail and distributive trade. Denied the same opportunity, the girls are sent to school

mostly to enhance their market value in marriage. Clearly the opportunities, and therefore the life chances, of male and female are different.

These disadvantages pervade all other aspects of life. In our computer and information and communication technology age, education even becomes more central. This is because most jobs now demand computer literacy. Those who are computer literate can access a worldwide opportunities, at least notionally, through the Internet. It is in this same world, which the phenomenal innovations in telecommunications has turned into a global village, that the disadvantages posed by gender are better appreciated.

But the differential access to opportunities is only one dimension of the consequences of gender inequalities. More telling is the health impact. As a cursory review of health statistics in Nigeria will show, women are more prone to most of the causes of death. Data from National Action Committee on HIV/AIDS shows that many more females, especially young women are coming down with the epidemic than males of the same age. The reason relates mostly to the power relations which both bring to the sexual encounter. Women are generally unable to discuss, let alone negotiate sexual matters even when the partner is known to have several other mates and therefore constitute high risk. In addition, the exceptionally high level of maternal mortality in Nigeria, in some areas up to 3000 per 100,000 births, can only be appropriately described as obstetric carnage. Most of the causes trace to the gender relations manifest in early marriage, decision-making about whether and

when to initiate ante-natal care, where to have the baby as well as lack of control over resources, including resources to pay for the needed care

The disadvantage posed by gender relations also includes avoidable conditions such as vesico vaginal fistulae, VVF, the agonizing condition of abnormal communication between the bladder and the vagina. This scourge is rooted in early marriage which leads to pregnancy at the time the body is yet to mature. Such pregnancy could result in protracted labour and could lead to VVF or worse. In many states, the practice of Female Genital Mutilation, often with un-sterile blades/instruments, continue. Female Genital Mutilation could lead to other complications in later life and could even lead to the transmission of HIV.

The disadvantages women suffer emanate from and are sustained in a complex set of socio-cultural reasons, all of which reflect the male dominance in society. Without more conscious efforts to create awareness about these disadvantages and then bring about change, this warning to women would be appropriate: male-dominated society is dangerous to your health.

There is no aspect of modern life which is not circumscribed by the nature of gender relations. Yet, the subject is ironically one of the least known challenges in Nigeria's march to social and economic development. There appears to be some conspiracy of silence!

GPI is breaking this conspiracy. It is doing much more to inform, conscientize and to educate and empower girls and women with knowledge and skills. Built on a philoso-

phy of “catch them young,” this NGO has trained eight sets of young girls in the wide and diverse aspects of gender and power in society. It goes beyond this to bring on board the adult community members, who are invariably the custodians and gatekeepers to societal values and norms.

The overall goal of achieving gender equality in Nigeria would certainly take more than the efforts of one NGO. What GPI is doing can only broach the path and contribute to the activities of others whose voices and actions will lead to the achievement of this goal. In only ten years, GPI has become a household name in its areas of operation. The sets of young girls who graduated from its training are well placed in higher institutions, offices and homes where they are determined, confident, assertive and truly empowered to create rooms for themselves. The documentation is appropriately titled **Roses and Thorns**, a reminder of the achievements and the challenges that lie ahead.

Part of this challenge is sustaining the momentum and reaching other areas of the country. With the determined and committed leadership and workforce, I have little doubt that GPI will continue to rise to the challenge. The next decade ahead will be very critical for (to borrow the Nigeria axiom) *‘moving the agenda forward.’*

Ogoh Alubo

(Member, GPI Board of Trustees)

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Chapter 1

BACKGROUND AND FOUNDATION

Girls' Power Initiative (GPI) came out as a product of Bene Madunagu's ten years of activism in Women In Nigeria, (WIN), was created by progressive forces, female and male in 1982 as an outcome of a national conference on the theme, "Women In Nigeria," which was organised at the Ahmadu Bello University, (ABU), Zaria, by university-based leftists and Marxists, deliberately to mobilize women for involvement in the struggle for social justice with focus on women's rights.

After the formal launch of WIN in 1983 in the second conference in Zaria, the organisation gained prominence and popularity and began to spread across many states in Nigeria. It was during this process of spread that Bene's colleague, Grace Osakue in 1986, joined WIN and was very active at her state's branch. They became close friends such that when Bene became the National Coordinating Secretary of WIN, Grace became the Deputy National Coordinating Secretary.

In 1993, Grace and Bene attended the 7th International Women and Health meeting in Kampala, Uganda. This was shortly after the 10th year anniversary of WIN. It

was then that Grace and Bene went through the progress WIN had made so far. They both agreed that much had been achieved by WIN in terms of putting women issues on the agenda of national debate, sensitizing women to take action for their rights and creating opportunities for women to leave the “kitchen” and be involved in events outside their homes. These became regular themes at numerous WIN annual conferences and research projects. However, in practical terms of emancipation and empowerment and concretely rejecting gender discrimination, a lot still remained to be done. As Bene recalled, “it was there in Kampala, Uganda that we both brainstormed to come up with new strategies that would make greater impact on women empowerment and gender equality. The experiences we went through at the IWHM there in Kampala led us to the strategy of ‘catching them young,’ directing our energies to working with adolescent girls to assist them to make the right choices and decisions as they grow up to be different from the submissive, accommodating attitude of women-imposed by socialisation. Hence, our logo from then on remains, “*Towards an Empowered Womanhood.*”

It was also there in Uganda that we came up with what name to call the organization. We both took pen and paper and did individual work of listing names that appealed to us, based on how we had conceptualised the organization to be. We merged the two lists and had 12 different and divergent names. We then approached a friend, Andrea Irvin, then a programme officer with the International Women’s Health Coalition, (IWHC), who was one of the participants

at the IWHM. We shared our thought with her and requested her to pick on the most appealing of the names in the list of 12. "Girls' Power Initiative sounds great," said Andrea. We both had the same name in our short listing of four from the 12. So, that was it. On our return from Uganda, we both stopped in Lagos to have consultations and got strong encouragement from Ms Tokunbo Ige, the Executive Director of LRRDC, (Legal Resource, Research and Documentation Centre). We then had another meeting with Dr. Peju Olukoya, the Executive Director of Women's Health Organization of Nigeria, with similar positive outcome. Within a few months in 1993, the first Board of Trustees of five members was set up, comprising Prof Eka Braide, Dr. Peju Olukoya, Mrs. Tokunbo Ige, Mrs Florence Asemota, Grace Osakue and Bene Madunagu.

We then worked on the instruments for take-off of the organisation. The constitution was ready before the end of 1993. We started the process of registration and gathering of necessary literature and other resources for effective take-off.

After establishing GPI and laying solid foundation for its future development, the next stage was - the beneficiaries, the adolescent girls: How and where to get them and how to start off. My daughter was the first guinea pig on my list as she was then 12 years. My next approach was to Eka Bassey who also had two adolescent daughters at the time. Ekanem Bassey, Eka's daughter, who trusted us to give a trial, then talked to her friends and in July 1994 we gathered nine girls in Calabar. A similar process was going on in Benin-City with Grace who also in July of 1994 started

the first lesson with six girls.”

Meanwhile, in Benin, the first meeting held in Grace Osakue’s house with only four girls and Grace was the only staff.

In 1994, GPI relocated to 32, Cooke Road, an office of two rooms and staff strength improved to four.

The first graduation ceremony held in 1997 with 13 girls graduating and over the years, the Benin Centre has graduated 145 girls with a staff strength of over 21.

“Through the personal sacrifice of the founding coordinators and the volunteering service of the first two facilitators, Eka Bassey in the South-East and Fatima Ikoghode, (now Ehita Ikoghode-Aikpitanyi) in the South-West, we carried on the weekly meetings until September 1994 when we had our first grant of \$5,100 from IWHC, specifically to bring together girls in Benin-City and Calabar to discuss and come up with what they (the girls) would want GPI programmes and activities to be.”

Thus, the coordinators conceived of GPI, developed it but the contents of the activities are products identified by the adolescents themselves as their priorities. The success story of GPI can be attributed to the fact that activities are identified by girls, they are involved in the planning and execution and hence, they own it as activities are geared to meet the needs of beneficiaries as conceptualized by them.

Why was GPI created?

Approximately, 26 million adolescents, more than 20% of Nigeria’s population of about 127 million are between the ages of 10-19. Majority of these adolescents grow up igno-

rant of issues of sexuality and gender. Yet, conservative traditions and cultures continue to expose young girl to exploitation. Young girls are further put at risk by poverty, sexual harassment and abuse. The influence of the media, increasing numbers of video shops and poverty, force girls into making uninformed choices that expose them to health hazards, including HIV/AIDS and unintended or unwanted pregnancy.

Accurate, non-judgmental information about human sexuality is largely unavailable to adolescents, especially girls. The combination of lack of information, poor self-esteem, low expectations and very few life options for young girls, apart from marriage and childbearing, leads to a wide range of physical and mental health problems as well as reinforce a cycle of ignorance, poverty and dis-empowerment.

Teenage pregnancy, unsafe abortion and HIV/AIDS pose serious health and social problems for adolescent girls. More than 150 out of every 1,000 girls give birth before the age of 19. There are high mortality and morbidity rates from unsafe abortions with over 80% of patients with abortion complications in Nigerian hospitals being adolescent girls. With deepening poverty and inflation, many do not have the means to go to hospitals. Furthermore, it is estimated that 72% of all deaths among young girls under 19 years, and 50% of Nigeria's high maternal mortality rates are young girls who procure unsafe abortion.

The rate of dropouts from schools, due to poverty and pregnancy among adolescent girls continues to increase. Women constitute about 49% of the Nigerian population but they remain in low careers, service and informal eco-

conomic sectors and with very insignificant representation at decision-making positions.

Gender discrimination and gender stereotyping continue to dog the abilities of girls and therefore, limit their opportunities and roles as social change-agents in their communities. Leadership is still largely male-dominated and the few women leaders still exhibit dominant patriarchal values and are most often handlers of family welfare in the absence of the other parent. These social obligatory roles for girls and young women are neither valued nor recognised as leadership initiatives and talents to be encouraged in positive ways.

Our society still sees leadership in patriarchal terms, referring only to their definition of masculinity, of unequal male-female power in relationships, dominance in decision-making at all levels, frequent representatives with opportunities for public appearance and authoritative speeches, etc, while non-sexist styles of leadership of non-male paradigm is not valued. The voices and power which girls have are still very largely ignored and undervalued. There is still demeaning representation of girls and women in the media, arts, popular culture, etc.

Girls and women are still largely represented as willing and disempowered victims and predators and provocateurs of sexual irresponsibilities of partners. Girls and women's sexuality is still being controlled within norms, cultural and traditional belief systems and reinforced by male interpretation of religious injunctions. The existing level of knowledge, attitudes, behaviour and beliefs in our communities put girls and women at risk of violence and exploita-

tion.

With increasing poverty and high cost of education, following massive privatisation of educational systems, many young girls start co-habiting before age 18, even in southern Nigeria where teenage marriages were on the decline. It is common now that nearly 40% of Nigerian girls have at least one abortion or one child before their 18th birthday. Many young people, particularly, young men, have multiple sexual partners, a risk factor for HIV/AIDS infection.

Every year, one out of every 20 adolescents would become infected with STIs, including HIV/AIDS. About 80% of HIV infections in Nigeria are contracted through sexual intercourse. The report of the 1999 HIV/syphilis sentinel sero-prevalence survey conducted by the Nigerian National AIDS and STDs control programme, recorded that in 1998 alone, 60% of the 20,334 AIDS cases in Nigeria were within the ages of 15-24 years. While the Nigerian HIV/AIDS prevalence is estimated at about 5.4%, the prevalence among the group, (15-24 years) ranges between 4.2 and 8.7% and the sad news is that these figures are rapidly increasing.

Various forms of gender-based violence, coupled with harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, son-preference, bride price, widowhood rites continue to put young girls and women at risk. Trafficking in girls and women and forced prostitution are regularly reported and these constitute grave dangers to the health and social status of girls and women. Although rape and child prostitution are illegal, law enforcement agents lack

the will to enforce or combat the violation of sexual rights of adolescent girls .

Thus, adolescents' health holds a very precarious balance of the entire social spectrum of sexual and reproductive health and this has countless implications for adolescents, both from physiological and psychological considerations. For instance, a girl of 16-19 years may have a body appearance that projects a grown-up person, but her reproductive organs may not fully reach maturity. Early marriage, sexual activity and too early motherhood block the chances of good and quality education as well as good career for young adolescent girls, and so does the risk from STIs and HIV/AIDS.

Extent of misinformation on sexuality issues among adolescents: A sexual health, sexual rights, reproductive health and reproductive rights dilemma

From baseline data collected from girls at first registration in GPI, there is a tremendous high level of myths and misconceptions that adolescents carry, which would expose them to various health risks.

About 70% of the girls do not know that friendship between a girl and a boy does not necessarily have to involve sexual activity. Majority of them too, do not know that they do not have to give in to sexual activity just because the male partner had been giving them gifts.

In the situation of such huge ignorance, estimated 75% had never heard about condom and so were at risk of being involved in unprotected sex with its attendant conse-

quences.

Most of them still maintained that FGM is a traditional practice and as part of their culture, and that there is nothing they could do than go through it. Some even consider it a taboo not to be so mutilated! Seventy-five per cent had heard about AIDS but had no accurate information as to methods of contracting it or of HIV as the causative agent of AIDS. Most of the girls had never heard of the rights of the child. They know about duties and responsibilities assigned to them, but not rights as girl-children. Most of them had studied biology in school as an examinable subject but had no basic understanding of the structure and functions of the female or male reproductive systems to be able to explain pubertal changes. Many also hold the belief that taking the drug called, “menstrogen” or various forms of concoction such as guinness stout and salt or lime will prevent pregnancy from unprotected sex. These are but few of the myths.

Misconceptions and ignorance which adolescents are saddled with have continued to justify the need for accurate information on sexuality issues. Sexual violence and harassment which violate women and girls’ rights and damage their self-esteem, physical and psychological health is a high occurrence in schools. This also reduces the ability of adolescent girls to deal with their sexuality in a positive way. This then increases the risk of unintended pregnancies, STIs, HIV/AIDS, unsafe abortion and hence, maternal mortality.

The role of GPI

Over the past decade, the role of youths in the process of popular democracy, population development and social integration had moved into the centre stage of national and global consciousness. Youth involvement and participation in social, economic and political development has become a vital aspect of popular democracy and the progress of every society.

Since the initiation of International Safe Motherhood Initiative in 1987 with the target of reducing maternal mortality by 50% by the year, 2000, maternal mortality rates have hardly reduced in Nigeria. Beyond clinical issues as factors affecting maternal mortality, are broader issues of social, cultural, economic and gender inequality. Comprehensive sexuality education, we believe, is key to addressing such issues.

In the Programme of Action (POA) of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), Cairo, 1995, governments, including Nigeria, made commitments to improve the reproductive and sexual health of adolescents and to provide access to age-appropriate and gender-sensitive information and services as stipulated in paragraph 7/47. Various other international agreements have also called for similar actions. Examples are the following:

- Fourth World Conference on Women, Platform for action (FWCW, PFA) paragraphs 80g, 83, 88b, 106, 107 (e.g.) 108k IIIb, etc.
- World Summit on Social Development, Programme

of Action (WSSD, POA) - Commitment 4n; Programme 6, 35c, 9e, etc.

- World Conference on Human Rights (WCHR), Declaration 21;
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 3.1, 3.2, 5, 14.2, 16.1 16.2, 17, 24.2;
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, (CEDAW) 10 (e, f, and h).

Following these provisions, the sexuality, sexual and reproductive health and rights programme actions by GPI are geared towards addressing the physical and emotional well-being of adolescent girls in particular, including their ability to be healthy and to remain free from too-early or unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion, STIs, including HIV/AIDS, sexual violence and coercion into risky health behaviour.

GPI programme actions go beyond focus on potential problems and challenges which the girls face, into activities that promote girls as assets and agents in social development, while equally providing them with safe space to find their voice and engage in leadership and life management skills development as well as critical thinking. Our girls use the opportunity to build their individual competence, skills and qualities while developing collective power and engaging in critical thinking about issues that affect their lives. Sexuality education helps young people develop the knowledge, autonomy and skills such as communication, decision-making and negotiation to make the transition to adulthood in good sexual health.

Furthermore, in the outcome document of Beijing Plus Five, (New York, 2002) paragraph 79 (f) - Actions to be taken by governments, the private sector, non-governmental organisations and other actors of civil society, are stated as follows:

“Design and implement programmes with the full involvement of adolescents, as appropriate to provide them with education, information and appropriate, specific, user-friendly and accessible services, without discrimination, to address effectively their reproductive and sexual health needs, taking into account their right to privacy, confidentiality, respect and informed consent and the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents and legal guardians to provide in manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child’s appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognised in the Convention on the Rights of the Child in conformity with the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and ensuring that all actions concerning children, the best interest of the child are primary consideration.

“These programmes should, inter alia, build adolescent girls’ self-esteem and help them take responsibility for their own lives, promote gender equality and responsible sexual behaviour, raise awareness about, prevent and treat sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS and sexual violence and abuse and counsel adolescents on avoiding unwanted and early pregnancies.”

In addition, paragraph 21 of ICPD Plus Five (New York, 1999) outcome documents states:

Governments should...

- a) meet the needs of youth, especially young women, with the active support, guidance and participation of parents, families, communities, non-governmental organisations and the private sector by investing in the development and implementation of national, regional and local plans. In this context, priority should be given to programmes such as education, income generating opportunities, vocational training and health services, including those related to sexual and reproductive health...”

The Nigerian National Council on Education approved the National Sexuality Education Curriculum on August 17, 2001, for upper primary school, junior secondary school, senior secondary school and tertiary institutions in Nigeria. GPI in collaboration with the Cross River State Ministry of Education has embarked on the training of secondary school teachers in the state, for the implementation of the National Sexuality Curriculum.

Chapter 2

GIRLS' POWER INITIATIVE AT A GLANCE

Girls' Power Initiative is an independent, not-for-profit, non-sectarian, non-partisan, non-governmental organisation. GPI was founded in 1993 but effectively started the execution of regular comprehensive sexuality education programmes and other related and relevant activities in 1994. GPI first started with two centres in Benin-City, Edo State and Calabar in Cross River State. By 2001 fiscal year, GPI increased its physical locations or centres to four with the two new centres in Asaba, Delta State and Uyo in Akwa Ibom State. The National Secretariat/Headquarters of GPI is in Calabar in Cross River State. GPI, by its registration and activities, is a charity organisation (Corporate Affairs Commission No. 10290, 1997). GPI was awarded a special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) in 2001.

The organisation focuses on the education, leadership and other gender-sensitive life management skills and information on human sexuality, sexual health, reproductive rights, particularly of adolescent girls, aged 10-18 years in Nigeria. Our mandate is to assist young girls to live healthy

lives and achieve their full potentials, towards an empowered womanhood. It also includes assisting young girls to overcome the risks of early sexual activity, adolescence; unwanted or unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS, unsafe abortions, all forms of rape and other types of gender-based violence and exploitation. GPI vigorously promotes gender equity and equality and works with girls to develop their leadership and capacity to respond to, and work for social transformation towards gender and social justice.

Our vision

Our vision has been and still remains that of concerted efforts at building a strong and empowered feminist institution with critical consciousness and capacity for analysis of social and gender prejudices as well as commitment to managing and educating girls into healthy, self-reliant, productive and confident women for the achievement of positive changes and transformation of patriarchal values in Nigeria.

Our mission

To empower Nigerian adolescent girls, especially those between 10-18 years, the formative years, and to promote their sexual health, reproductive health, sexual rights, reproductive rights and through comprehensive sexuality, gender and human rights education, counselling and referral services, skills acquisition and social and community action.

Given the complexity of the needs of adolescents in their

growing-up, GPI has designed programmes with the young people's involvement to address the needs of adolescents in their diversities. Thus, the web of GPI activities is as intricate as it is comprehensive.

Our goals

Our major goals include:

- Achievement of healthy and empowered womanhood in Nigeria
- Advancing the understanding of adolescents and society, of the essentiality of sexual health, reproductive health, sexual rights and reproductive rights as central to gender and social justice in Nigeria
- Achievement of high quality sexual health and reproductive health and the human rights of adolescent girls in Nigeria.

Overall objectives

- To decrease the rates of pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS among adolescent girls aged 10 - 18 years in the South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria
- To decrease pre-marital and casual sex among adolescent girls of 10-18 years
- To increase age of sexual initiation among adolescent girls in the South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria
- To develop and increase leadership and other life management skills among adolescent girls in South-

South Nigeria

- To reduce the violation of the rights of girls and women arising from ignorance and sexism
- To reduce the social, cultural and religious practices, myths and norms that violate the rights of the girl-child
- To increase the awareness and knowledge of girls, parents, guardians, teachers, policy - makers, media practitioners and the general public about issues of sexuality, sexual and reproductive health and rights of adolescent girls
- To scale-up GPI sexuality education into Cross River State schools in collaboration with Cross River state Ministry of Education.

Strategies

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

1. **Individual level:** This is directed at the girls to empower them as social change agents through increasing their self-esteem, knowledge, skills and self-efficiency.
2. **Social network level:** This is focused at the level of their parents, other family members and peers to strengthen positive relationships among the girls and encourage healthy social relations to provide them with the necessary support for their actions.
- 3 **Community level:** This is aimed at creating new

and broader enabling environment and opportunities to empower the girls to challenge patriarchal values and discriminatory practices and beliefs that put girls at risk and to create awareness about the dynamism of culture to facilitate positive social changes towards gender justice.

4. **Institutional level:** This is also focused on social changes through activities and advocacy for policy changes that would impact systemic practices and norms that affect girls and their communities.

The following strategies are being used to achieve the stated objectives:

1. Education and capacity-building
 - (a) Education for girls
 - (b) Public education
 - (c) Capacity-building for alumnae and staff, including internship
2. Advocacy and policy articulation
3. Networking, coalition, collaboration
4. Gender Training Institute
5. Specialised services provision
6. Research and documentation
7. Organisational institutionalisation

1. **Education and capacity-building**
 - a) **Education for girls:**

Objectives:

- To educate, inform and train adolescent girls on issues of sexuality, sexual and reproductive health and rights in Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Edo and Delta States.
- To train adolescent girls for peer counselling on sexuality, sexual and reproductive health and rights and undertake relevant community-based activities in Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Edo and Delta States.
- To create safe space for adolescent girls to develop their talents, public speaking and leadership skills to challenge gender discrimination and stereotypes.
- To expose girls to various career opportunities available to human beings, irrespective of gender.
- To promote healthy and responsible adolescent behaviours through productive use of their free time and assist them to develop their creativity and talent for economic independence, in order to reduce girls' risks of sexual exploitation for financial returns.
- To enhance the leadership capacities of adolescent girls in South-South Nigeria in area of sexuality, sexual and reproductive health and rights and in advocacy to end gender-based violence.

Activities include:

- Weekly participatory discussions and classroom -type lessons
- School-based outreach youth corners and lessons

- Girls planning and organising of speak-out at seminars and workshops
- Excursions
- Empowerment through economic skills, building talents through exhibitions and contests for girls and boys
- Knowledge and public speaking through debates, essay, quiz and drama competitions
- Expanding the reach for girls as social change agents through holiday programme of discussions and lessons for girls outside the scope of the centre programmes
- Public education through graduation ceremonies to showcase the empowered girls.

Indicators

- Number of girls able to communicate and discuss freely and speak out about injustices and gender prejudices
- Number of girls involved in decision-making in their families and communities
- Number of girls taking up the challenge of venturing into male-dominated professions
- Increased ability to make choices, especially on the use of contraception, protection against HIV/AIDS and other STIs
- Improved public speaking skills
- Increased mutual respect, collaboration and solidarity among girls and boys
- Increased feedbacks from girls on interventions in

- the community
- Increased safer sex practices among adolescents.

b) Public education

Objectives:

- To bridge the communication gap between adolescent girls and their parents, guardians, teachers and the community at large
- To reduce the culture of silence over sexuality issues
- To create awareness towards breaking existing myths, misconceptions and prejudices
- To sensitise the public and policy-makers on sexuality, sexual and reproductive health and rights needs of adolescents
- To create a supportive environment for social change activities by the girls
- Using community video watch to generate debates on sexuality issues
- To involve media in efforts to promote adolescent health and rights
- To promote gender equality and reduce gender-based violence
- To promote partnerships among stakeholders for social and gender justice
- To promote social and cultural values that protect sexual and reproductive rights.

The public education activities consist of:

- (a) **Gender Development Institute (GDI):** For the promotion of gender consciousness, building capac-

ity of organisations working in the areas of sexual and reproductive health, research and training towards the institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming in the Nigerian society as well as expanding the dialogue and understanding of sexuality within and beyond the reproductive health agenda. It is also to develop the mass of persons with an understanding of gender issues towards training agents for gender justice.

(b) **Forum for parents, guardians, teachers:** To sensitise parents, guardians and teachers on the importance of talking to their children about sexuality issues. This is also aimed at improving communication between parents/guardians and teachers with their wards to involve girls in decision-making at all the spheres of their life engagement.

(c) **Capacity-building:**

i Staff training (alumnae and internship): The capacity of GPI functionaries would be developed, increased and strengthened to update and improve their skills in imparting information and facilitating discussions from a gender perspective on adolescents' sexual and reproductive health and rights and acting as mentors to the girls. Such training will include:

- Management and monitoring skills
- Facilitating skills
- Youth-friendly programme development

- Networking and advocacy
- Planning, monitoring, evaluation and report writing
- Application of information and communication technologies, ICTs.

It also includes staff welfare and motivation through:

ii. **Training and re-training of school teachers and counsellors:** Special human sexuality training is conducted for teachers in Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Edo and Delta States for the implementation of the National Curriculum on Sexuality Education.

iii. **Training of media practitioners:** Special gender sensitisation training is conducted for practitioners in the print and electronic media for gender-sensitive reportage of issues of sexuality, sexual and reproductive health and rights.

(d) **Public education through the media:** This consists of the following avenues:

- i. Seminars, rallies and workshops working on relevant dates and issues to create awareness on specific issues. Examples:
 - February 14 - St. Valentine's Day, seminar on responsible relationships
 - March 8 - International Women's Day.

- May 27 - Nigerian Children's Day
- May 28 - Day of the Action for Women's Health - workshops to focus on services and health sector reforms to address girls and women's sexual and reproductive rights
- June 12-16 - Five days of action to mark the Day of the African Child. June 16, organising events to create awareness on the rights of the child
- November 17 - World Day for the Prevention of Child Abuse
- November 25-December 10 - 16 days of action on Violence Against Women
- December 1 - World AIDS Day.

ii. GPI on Air: This involves regular radio and TV education programmes by GPI girls, staff and parents on the issues of adolescent sexuality, health rights and responsibilities. This will also include newspaper publications. The aim is also to produce, air and evaluate a weekly TV programme for public education to promote healthy sexuality.

iii **Newsletter:** For public education, locally, nationally regionally and globally on issues affecting adolescents for cross-boundary action on youth participation and involvement in matters affecting their lives and as leaders of tomorrow.

2. **Advocacy and policy:** This will involve workshops and meetings for and with media practitioners, law-makers and policy-makers in the related ministries of health, education, youth development, women affairs, justice, information and social welfare. There will be special discussion forum with legislators. This strategy will focus on institutions for policy changes, policy reviews or formulation to address the inequalities between females and males and for the promotion of laws that protect sexual and reproductive rights, as well as foster policy advocacy and dialogue.
3. **Networking, coalition, national and regional integration:** This is aimed at collective action to empower girls, boys, women and men as well as communities to participate actively in achieving the highest possible standards of health and development. This will help to mobilise support for community-based efforts to promote sexual and reproductive health and so also inter and intra-regional integrated

action for HIV/AIDS prevention. This will also promote the awareness of the interdependence of reproductive health and broader economic, social and political development issues to enhance innovative models for social change. The strategy we believe will widen space for groups that would address new approaches for social development in diverse social and cultural contexts for more effective and wider outcomes.

4. **Research and documentation:** This is designed to ensure:

- Action - oriented researching, developing, producing and disseminating comprehensive information, education and communication manuals on issues of sexuality, sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Disseminating information to strengthen youth leadership and social participation and promote youth rights, responsibilities and access to youth -friendly services.
- Researching, documenting and disseminating youth-centred approaches for positive changes in sexual behaviour towards HIV/AIDS prevention.
- Production and reproduction of current and accurate materials, (IEC) on HIV/AIDS prevention and control.

- Production and dissemination of issue-specific pamphlets, books and manuals to promote youth and community social actions.

Services

This will cover:

- Monitoring and counselling services to reduce cases of the violation of the rights of girls and women arising from ignorance and sexism.
- Provision of space for adequate privacy and confidentiality for adolescents to seek ways to control or diagnose infections and to develop healthy relationships.
- To encourage adolescents to seek appropriate medical and health services rather than resorting to self-medication or quacks.
- To create safe space for intellectual development and initiate a tripartite network of policy-makers, healthcare providers and lawyers for the education and management of gender-based violence.

The services include:

- Counselling
- Referrals
- Home visits

- Library services.

Organisational institutionalisation meetings

To plan, review, develop and execute innovative activities for increased and improved impact of GPI; to improve the quality of staff input through appropriate training, reportage and exposure through sufficient staff development policy. The statutory meetings are:

- Board of trustees meetings
- Executive board meetings
- Advisory programme management board meetings
- Programme execution team meetings
- Office management committee meetings
- Departmental meetings
- Other ad hoc committees meant for the planning and execution of some specific activities.

Stakeholder analysis

Key stakeholders: School principals, media persons, community leaders, policy makers.

Primary stakeholders: Centre girls; outreach schools and holiday programme participants, their parents and teachers.

Secondary stakeholders: Other girls in the South-South region of Nigeria, boys, parents, teachers, NGOs, media persons, community leaders, religious leaders and policy-makers.

ers; similar organisations, particularly in Africa and in other regions of the world as well as agencies, private sector organisations and foundations.

Chapter 3

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Girls' Power Initiative now conducts centre activities in four centres in four states out of six in the South-South zone of Nigeria. These are Calabar in Cross River, Uyo in Akwa Ibom, Benin-City in Edo and Asaba in Delta States.

The National Secretariat is housed in Calabar in Cross River State. The governing board/board of trustees comprises gender-sensitive activists. The board's chairperson is an educationist and a public and community health consultant. Other members include a retired school administrator, now a school proprietor, a health care provider and consultant, medical sociologist; a legal practitioner, an NGO administrator, the chairperson of the executive board and one zonal coordinator.

There is an executive board responsible for co-ordination, planning, supervision and monitoring of the execution of GPI programme activities at the four centres. There is also an advisory programme management board, consisting of heads of department, for interdepartmental cohesion and effective administration. For purposes of good administration and quality output, the executive board, in consultation with staff and direction of the board of trustees, cre-

ated relevant departments and units and committees within the organisation. The departments include Public Affairs and Policy, Education, Accounts/Financial Affairs, Administration, Research and Documentation, Skills and Counselling and Maintenance, Sanitation and Security. Statutory committees include Programme Execution Team (PET), Office Management Committee (OMC) and Editorial Committee. GPI also utilises the services of technical experts as consultants and resource persons for staff development and skills development for GPI girls.

In the 10 years of existence, GPI has passed through phases to stabilise and work for sustainability, while applying innovative strategies to achieve its set objectives. We pay attention to staff development and motivation in the effort to achieve higher levels of accountability, transparency, openness and quality management.

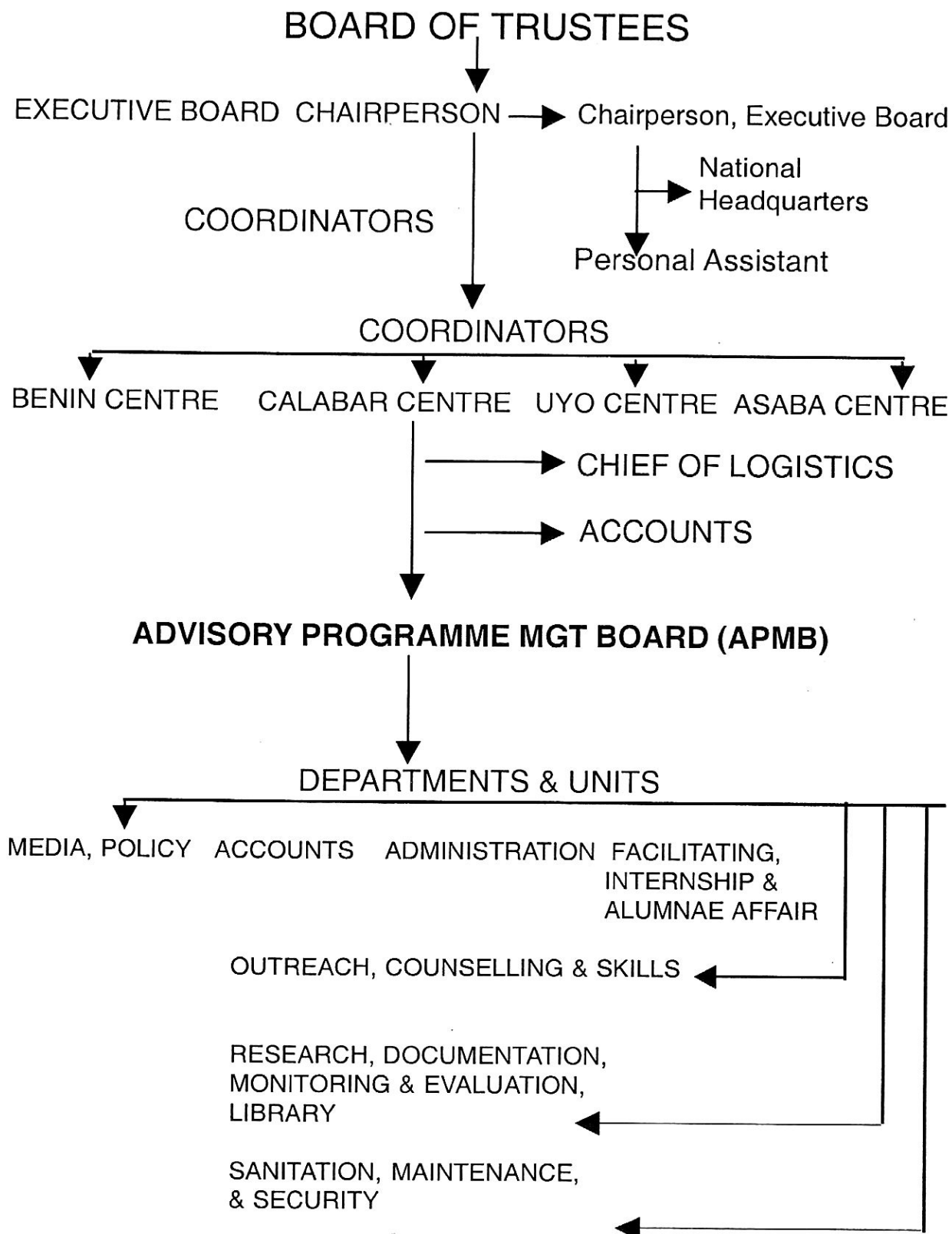
Staff development

From time to time, staff members are trained internally and externally to enhance their productive capabilities. GPI graduates are doing well in the society and are making use of the GPI information for social interventions. A good number of them are in tertiary institutions

Internship

The organisation also runs internship programme in which graduates are given the opportunity to serve as a means of gaining experience. They go through the different departments in the office in order to develop skills in office management and administration

GIRLS' POWER INITIATIVE (GPI) NIGERIA ORGANISATIONAL CHART



Chapter 4

PROGRAMME IMPACT ON PRIMARY BENEFICIARIES

How we measure impact

Besides the use of formative evaluation (needs assessment, issue assessment and process evaluation) as well as summative evaluation (outcome and impact evaluation), GPI Calabar centre has designed instruments modelled from the experiences of Ms Foundation for Women, Collaborative Fund for Healthy Girls/Healthy Women, to measure how GPI programmes impact on the adolescent girls that benefit from its programme activities.

The instrument, Voice, Action, Comportment and Opportunity, or VACO checklist is used to measure girls' empowerment as defined by us. This is derived from our hypothesis that as dis-empowered, ignorant and shy girls enter GPI, they go through GPI educational sessions, skills development, library and counselling services, leadership and life management skills development, they get transformed and empowered.

Our checklist of empowerment produced by Calabar centre, measures the ability of the girls to take charge of their lives through making responsible decisions, informed choices as well as acquiring and making use of

knowledge and skills; being able to differentiate between right and wrong decisions; speaking up for themselves and others; being able to set their vision and goals in life; being able to clarify and set their limits by letting people know who they are and what they stand for; developing critical consciousness; having the ability to do what others feel they cannot; knowing their rights and insisting on their rights and actively defending them; recognising injustice and acting to defend same; being assertive; taking initiative; being resourceful; being able to influence their peers positively; setting clear values and standards in their lives; being confident, etc.

In summary, the instrument of VACO measures: *Voice* (speaking out, expressing confidence, etc); *Action* (encouraging and supporting their peers to change risky behaviours, etc.); *Comportment* (looking at others directly, looking up and ahead while walking, being able to resist negative peer pressure, etc.); and *Opportunity* (taking initiative, offering and volunteering to serve, taking responsibility, etc.).

Our monitoring and evaluation at the end of each project year, and by the graduation of the girls in their final (3rd year) in the programme has always, in the 10 years of our operation, given us a high score of over 75%. We have now developed a new checklist, modelled from VACO. It is now, VACOK - Voice, Action, Comportment, Opportunity and Knowledge for our measurement of empowerment in the assessment of girls graduating from GPI programmes. The valedictory speeches of the GPI graduates also serve as

a measure of GPI impact. The concept of leadership is also measured by its checklist instrument. Periodic questionnaires are also administered to the primary beneficiaries, their social network as well as other stakeholders to enable us to review and improve on our programmes.

Key accomplishments of GPI

Ten years of positive development and institutionalisation of GPI researches; documentation and advocacy for policy changes; e.g contributing to the enactment of laws against Female Genital Mutilation, child marriage and child abuse in Cross River and Edo States as well as domestic violence in Cross River State.

- Launching and building of the Gender Development Institute, (GDI) to promote gender consciousness through research and training towards gender equity and equality.
- Community intervention in eight communities: Four in Cross River and four in Edo States to stop Female Genital Mutilation, using the law that had been passed in the two states.
- Gaining the special consultative status of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, ECOSOC.
- Selected as part of the Nigerian team in an exchange programme to Mozambique on youth sexuality, sexual and reproductive health issues, to share GPI's experiences. This led to the approval of sexuality education in schools in Mozambique.
- Successfully graduated eight sets of beneficiaries in

both Cross River and Edo States centres, having grown from initial group of 15 girls in July 1994 to an organization that today reaches out to approximately 5,000 adolescent girls, particularly in the South-South zone of Nigeria, through centre-based lessons, school holiday programmes, radio and television programmes and regular quarterly newsletter.

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

Increased funding base from less than USA \$5,000 in 1993 fiscal year to over \$300,000 by 2002 fiscal year.

- Institutionalised youth corners in some schools in Cross River State for information on issues of concern expressed by youths and the positive impact from school management testimonies.
- Succeeded in collaborating with ministries of education in four states, including the Cross River State Ministry of Education to train school teachers for the implementation of the National Sexuality Education Curriculum.

Selected by AMANITARE, African Partnership for

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of African girls and women to host “The New Generation” programme coordination.

- Co-hosted a training with RAINBO and IWHC for skills development for young women activists from and around Africa in February 2002.
- Developed three volumes of revised edition of GPI training manual to meet the age-specific needs and experiences of adolescents, aged between 10-18 years. The major revisions on the manual focused on making it more user-friendly and clearly outlining the steps and methodologies used for each section with input from girls’ education curriculum experts.

Chapter 5

THE PUBLIC ON GPI: TESTIMONIES

Voices of health service providers

It's a revolution in understanding health problems of adolescent girls

GPI has brought about a revolution in understanding health problems of adolescent girls. GPI girls are better informed and can express themselves and say what their health problems are. Not only do they do this for themselves, they also bring their friends and even parents to access proper healthcare services. I say this not because I have close working relationship with GPI but because it is the reality.

“GPI girls come to me for medical check-up with understanding and expectations. They are more open than elderly people. They don't hide whether they are sexually active or have an STI. They tell you point blank that they want to undergo test(s) for STIs, etc; and those who have

any problems would tell me they will ensure that their partners are treated. Some married women cannot say this!

“A striking incident was a GPI girl who came to me with a breast lump. I asked her how she knew she had a breast lump at that age, she told me she was taught in GPI how to do breast self - examination to check abnormal lumps. I was fascinated. She was finally operated upon.”

■ **Dr. (Mrs) Gloria Archibong**

Medical Director, Faith Foundation Clinic, Calabar.

GPI is improving the health of our future generation

“I have handled cases referred to me by GPI and found it quite interesting and heart-warming to see young girls come openly and speak out about what they feel or observe in their bodies that is unusual.

“I have had cases of girls who come here with their parents to say they have fever when in fact they have an STI. Some parents talk for their children. It is different when you are dealing with GPI girls. It makes my work easier and straightforward. GPI is improving the health of our future generation.”

■ **Dr. Peters**

*Medical Director, Heritage Clinic
Calabar.*

A brighter future is assured

“For the adolescent girls who benefit from GPI programmes and the larger society which the organisation interacts with, a brighter future is visible. A lot of girls come to me for medical advice; some GPI girls some directed by GPI girls.

“GPI girls are generally aware of safer sex, prevention and treatment of STIs and a lot about HIV/AIDS. About 25% of infertility cases I have handled are as a result of untreated STIs. Because GPI girls have information on these issues, they are bound not to suffer such fate.

“I see the issue of systematic improvement on reproductive health of women and girls as a result of information given to girls in GPI.”

■ **Dr. Ani Etokidem**

UCTH/Executive Director, ASH, Calabar.

GPI is the best thing that has happened to us

“GPI is the best thing that has happened to us, east of the Niger. I have met quite a number of girls whose lives have been transformed by GPI and they have been able to resist negative peer pressure and risky behaviours.

“If people (males and females) my age, had the opportunity GPI girls have, a lot of reproductive health problems existing such as infertility, unsafe abortions and even loss of lives would never have been.

“I do not work directly with GPI, but I listen to their media programmes and I have interacted with GPI girls.

They come here and mention terminologies that some of my health workers have never heard about.”

■ **Dr. Bassey N. Ekpe**

ENT Unit, UCTH, Calabar.

I acknowledge and admire the great work of GPI

“Who would believe that gold could be obtained from the log? Yet, put that piece of log in the hands and through the instruments of a skilful carpenter, you get the most aesthetic piece of work to bargain for.

“That’s what GPI has been doing to the Nigerian girl-child. Whoever thought a girl could turn out to become so useful of herself or the society? Who would have considered the great potentials in her? Who ever considered inculcating in her, the values of self-worth and assertiveness?

“I congratulate the Coordinators of GPI, Prof. Bene Madunagu and Mrs. Grace Osakue for their visionary leadership of GPI. I acknowledge and admire the great work you are doing in the lives of girl-children through GPI.

“Keep up the work, keep up the vision and keep expanding the vision. Being surrounded by such dedicated members board of trustees, management, staff and friends of GPI, you are assured of continuous support to achieve more for the up-coming generations of the endangered species of the African soil - the girl- child.”

■ **Dr. Emmanuel A. Ojah**

Friend of GPI, Calabar.

Girl-children have come of age

“I can confidently commend the efforts of GPI programmes in transforming the lives of adolescent girls in our society. GPI has created a tremendous level of awareness. Before now, people were of the belief that only the male-child matters; females were not encouraged to go to school. Now, things have changed.

“Generally now, it is the girl-child who takes care of the family. The adolescent girls that pass through the GPI programme, after being empowered have better facilities to care and educate others. Politically, there is a lot of awareness on women participation. Many more women, through a programme like GPI’s are getting information on how to run the affairs of the society.

“Young girls have come to realise that they are in a better position to handle themselves. Through the sexuality education, they are now aware of the type of relationship they get themselves involved in. GPI has contributed immensely to the development of the society.

■ **Dr. Oscar Umoh**

Medical Director, Hannah Foundation Clinic, Calabar.

Voices from parents

GPI has made my child bright and confident

“I consider GPI programme good and beneficial, not only to adolescent girls but also to men and women in our society. My daughter is now more confident in herself. She is happy all the time. She is more enterprising. She is more interested

in mathematics. Through the teaching she receives from GPI, she is building her self-confidence in the right direction. GPI has contributed to my daughter's interest in her career."

■ **Very Rev. Osong A. Edet**

I thank GPI for my child

"I first heard about GPI through my daughter. In fact, GPI has changed the behaviour of my daughter positively. She is now very careful about the people she makes friends with. She is not loose. She thinks positively concerning her career (medicine) and it is the GPI that has exposed her to this possibility. The reasons for her positive attitude is as a result of the information she receives from GPI. She, at times, educates me on things I do not even know."

■ **Mr. Eshiet**

The world must hear about GPI

"We want to let the world know that girls are not taught to be corrupt in GPI, but rather, GPI polishes them up. GPI has done a lot for my family. Our daughters are no longer shy, they can now address any congregation without stress. They have proved to be girls, anywhere anytime. They are always fighting for their rights, even at home. We are impressed about the activities of GPI. People initially discouraged us that GPI corrupts girls but we were not deterred. Our children must graduate from GPI before we are satisfied."

■ **Francis and Felicia, Police Officers,**
Parents of three GPI girls.

GPI should go nation-wide

“I love exposing my children to educational programmes to add to their knowledge. GPI is one of such which has been of great benefit to my daughter. My daughter is now very responsible, duty-conscious; does not keep bad friends, concentrates on her education and very close to me. I make it a point of duty to check her GPI notebook after every Sunday session. I realised that GPI has helped to educate my girl on her sexuality, responsible living and respect for elders. I feel the government and GPI sponsors should prevail and get GPI introduced in other states of the federation.”

■ **Mr. Bassey Offiong Etim,**

Nigerian Prisons Service, Calabar.

I want GPI in my village

“My daughters are now able to take care of their personal hygiene. They now have the ability to resist harassment from the opposite sex. GPI is a wonderful organisation. I want it to come to my village.”

■ **Mrs. C. E. Enyieko,**

Teacher.

Good news for girl-children

“I have better news about every child who is attending the GPI programme. They are obedient, smart, truthful and respectful. Every girl-child who attends GPI programme struggles to go to school.”

■ **Mr. Ekpo Jack Inyang,**

Civil Servant.

The training is right

“My children now have good communication skills. They are very hard working through the effort of one of my daughters that is in GPI. She helps at home a lot. She is no more a problem to me because she is able to take good care for herself.”

■ **Mrs Elizabeth Eneji.**

My daughter is now a model

“There has been considerable encouragement and positive changes in the life of my daughter. She has that sense of maturity and responsibility. I know it is the GPI programme that has influenced her ways of doing things.”

■ **Mr. Okon Edet,**
Civil Servant.

‘BPI’ for my boys!

“Thanks to GPI for the positive changes I have noticed in my daughter since she became a GPI girl. I wish I had another girl who would have equally become a member. GPI should introduce Boys’ Power Initiative so that I can send all my boys there.”

■ **Mrs. Esemoikhai.**

God bless GPI

“My daughter has improved a little, she has been trying since she started GPI. We know from the Bible that it is only God that is perfect. GPI should put in more efforts into their programmes, I pray to God to enable the organisation to stand firm.”

■ **Mr. Akinola.**

Good changes in my girl

“There is new improvement in terms of my daughter’s behaviour since she became a GPI girl. GPI is trying and it should keep it up.”

■ **Mrs. Eda.**

My expectations

“I expect to see changes in Mildred, especially in the way she communicates. I believe she will improve because she has only spent three months with the organisation.”

■ **Mrs. Otu.**

To my daughters’ rescue

“I am a parent of two GPI girls, I heard about GPI from my friend and since then I have always allowed my two daughters to attend the programmes because they were very shy. Since they became members of GPI, they are no more shy and they can now express themselves in the midst of others. There is also improvement in their manner of approach to me and other elders around.”

■ **Mrs. Idubor**

I’m grateful

“I am a father of two GPI girls, one of which (Rebecca) is now a graduate. The other one (Marian) is still with GPI. The two improved greatly, especially in their manner of approach to people. I am very grateful to GPI.”

■ **Mr. Abebe.**

Thanks to GPI

“I learnt about GPI from my niece who is now a GPI graduate. She used to share the information she got from GPI with me whenever she returned from GPI meetings. As a result, I allowed Pat to join GPI, particularly because of her hitherto childish behaviour, which I wanted her to stop. She now behaves maturely.

Thanks to GPI.”

■ **Mrs Oko-Oboh.**

Hoping for my girl

“My daughter is good in most ways, but hot-tempered. This I wanted her to improve on and that made me to ask her to join GPI. In fact, she is improving.”

■ **Mrs. Edeh.**

Voices of GPI graduates

The comments below represent those of GPI primary beneficiaries who have successfully concluded the 3-year educational programme of GPI. It is a reflection of their perceptions before and after GPI training and subsequent application of knowledge that the organisation has imparted to them. Opportunities utilized by them to carry out social interventions and generate change at various social settings as well as increased level of consciousness amongst them, we believe, have prepared them for useful future life.

Theodora Itassam's view before and after her graduation from GPI are reflected in her comments below:

"GPI has educated me in many ways, for example, being assertive: assertiveness, meaning knowing your rights and claiming them in a polite way. I did not know my rights, not to talk of claiming them politely. This I learnt in GPI. The society believes that menstruation is a disease or a curse from God, I who had once believed so, called it a taboo. But in GPI I was taught that menstruation is a blessing from God unto women because without it, there would be no reproduction. I was also taught how to take care of myself during this period.

"... In politics, I also believed that females cannot make useful decisions concerning the affairs of the state and so should not be involved in politics. In GPI, I was made to realise that such statement is incorrect because it encourages gender discrimination by men, out of ignorance. After all, it takes only our brains to take decisions and not our sex organs."

Arit Edet, a 1999 GPI graduate equally had this to say:

"I came to the world without knowing anything about my body. I started growing up, I reached pubertal stage when things in my body started changing. With that I started seeing my menstruation. Not long, some boys started dating me.

"Some months back, I was forced to believe in one of the cultural prejudices; my parents persuaded me to believe

that it was good and that it would make me not to become a promiscuous child by going through Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). It was a painful thing to pass through.

“I did not know my sexual health and rights so I fell a victim of teenage pregnancy and there was nothing I could do other than go for abortion because I was still young and never planned to be a mother then. I had inexplicable anxiety, feeling that something bad might happen. I was scared then because I did not know that women’s rights are human rights till I joined Girls’ Power Initiative (GPI).”

Emelia Eyo, a 1999 GPI graduate also recounts her experience at GPI:

“The organization has changed my life greatly and transformed me to a new and informed person. GPI has taught me about the facts behind all societal myths. This organization has enabled me to handle my parent-child relationship, relationships between me and my peers and the opposite sex. Before I joined GPI I was ignorant of all these information and this made me behave in a passive and sometimes arrogant manner. As an uninformed and societal myth believer, this affected the rights and privileges I had which I had no knowledge of.

“GPI has also changed my father from a sexist to a conscientised man. This happened when I persuaded him to attend the parents/daughters/ teachers forum, organised by GPI. He and my mother are now able to work together perfectly well, and this has made him appreciate womanhood and he has learnt to respect women’s rights...

“The organisation has also helped me, particularly on how to approach any conflict with my parents and peers and how to communicate with them appropriately through training on decision-making and communication skills.

“GPI is the source of that solid foundation I have built in my life. This wonderful organisation is inevitable and necessary for all adolescent girls.”

Arit Ita Ekanem a 1999 GPI graduate recalled GPI’s transformational role in her life:

“... With the training I have undergone with GPI, I have overcome certain social prejudices against women. This organization has made me to understand that for the sake of peace, equity, economic and political growth, there must be equality among human beings. This organisation has made me to understand that sexuality does not mean sex.

My greatest happiness is the ability GPI has given me to promote women’s rights and values. GPI has created awareness in me to be firm in taking decisions and then take a stand on any issue especially those that affect women in the society. I have now understood that men’s domination and oppression over women is as a result of ignorance, superstition and false beliefs and most important, girl-child education is crucial in order to ensure her strategic standing in the society. My greatest joy too, is the leadership skills given me.”

Merylyn Okwechime here, presents her experience:

“When I joined GPI, I realised that awareness was the key word because most girls do certain things out of ignorance. There in GPI I knew that I had rights in the society, nobody deserved to be raped, that women and men are equal and also that nobody is inferior to another. I also learnt to have self-confidence in myself. GPI is a place where you can air your opinion and somebody would listen and be ready to answer your questions...”

Deborah Momoh too, had this to say:

“My being in GPI has made me to know who I really am. It has helped me to see the real me and not what the society claims I am.”

Edna Amiebenomon a 2000 GPI graduate says thus:

“I can vividly remember when I heard about GPI from my friend, I felt it was a place you just go and waste your time when you are less busy. This then made me to harden my mind because I thought they were training girls to be politicians, which I never intended to be at that time. I became a member of GPI in 1998 and if I tell you I have gained nothing since then I would be lying because GPI has considerably helped to change my ways of doing things, I will like to make a special appeal to parents to encourage their children to attend GPI programmes where they will be taught human values. I urge the state governments to help build this inestimable organisation morally, financially and organizationally so that they can help build our nation for a better tomorrow.”

Beverly Ikpi, who graduated in 2001.

“GPI has added value to lives and so I will ever and always stand to protect the interest of this great organisation.”

Precious Eugene, 2001 GPI graduate:

“It has been a wonderful course; a tonic that has left me confidently assured and courageous to forge ahead.”

Gloria Henry Edet, 2001 GPI graduate and first prize winner for carrying out most fruitful intervention said this about GPI:

“As one of the beneficiaries of GPI programme, I feel very much opportune to be a participant in the 3-year programme from 1998-2001. Taking a look at my life before I came to the organisation, life had seemed an adventure to me. Although I was not modest in expressing myself, but it is said that a mind that is not constantly cultivated and developed will continue to sink into the black sea of ignorance. I was totally ignorant of harmful socio-cultural practices such as the Female Genital Mutilation, a cultural practice in my community that I was to undergo. It was with the information I received in this organisation that I was able to enlighten and dissuade my parents from carrying out the rites on me.

“GPI has exposed me in such a way that I am confident in my feelings and motives and I have grown to love taking on challenges, no matter the circumstances.”

Agbama Endurance graduated in 2001, and for her experiences, she says:

“GPI taught me how to be independent and appreciate myself being a girl-child... GPI is not just a meeting place but a family gathering where we can discuss the things that bother us as girls.”

Ann Fubara, a 2000 GPI graduate notes:

“I had been in GPI since July 1998 to year 2000. For the first time I was in a position to be among girls. I had the opportunity to chair a meeting which by this means that you are in control from the beginning till the end. I also had the opportunity to rapporteur. Several lessons were offered on topics like women’s health and everything that had to do with life. The most important topic to me was leadership skills because I have an ambition in life of being a leader. We have been taught what a leader should do, who a leader is, qualities of a leader, how a leader should behave, etc.

“I am a born-again Christian and in a charismatic movement. We are made to believe that women are supposed to be behind. In GPI I have learnt that God himself did not ordain this but that women should move along with men as ‘help-mates’, meaning doing things together hand-in-hand.

“I have been able to know that I can achieve whatever I want to achieve because I have what it takes. I know that it is GPI that has given me that courage. GPI has taught me not to conform because it is not everything in the society

that is true: that I have to check very well to see whether any belief is right or wrong.

“I want to tell every girl that you can be useful. You should see yourself as somebody that can be useful to yourself, no matter the social level, whether you are educated or not, poor or rich. I want to tell you that the little from your boyfriend or husband is not all that matters, but you having a skill or something to support yourself. This will give you respect. Women should see themselves as useful instruments and fight for what rightly belongs to them.”

“GPI has really affected my life. I now know my rights as a woman and I am empowered. GPI’s knowledge has enabled me to know how to use my rights to create a positive development in the society.”

Name: **Fidelia Omonuwa,**

Nickname: Distinct.

Year of graduation: 1997.

“GPI has really helped me in my sex life and also encouraged me to appreciate myself, and has given me the ability to live a decent life on campus.”

Name: **Blessing Olumese,**

Nickname: Smiling.

Year of graduation: 1998.

“GPI has empowered me with the relevant information on sexual and reproductive health and rights, personal empowerment skills, which have enhanced my relationship

with others.”

Name: **Christabel Ene Unobe,**

Nickname: Belle.

Year of graduation: 1999.

“GPI brought me out of the shackles of ignorance, taught me to know my rights as a woman in the society, that no man is superior to a woman. GPI has enabled me to develop my potentials and taught me how to stand out in a society like ours. Hence, I am a developed person, socially, emotionally and all round. Thanks to GPI!

Name: **Sophia Joy Aigbokhai,**

Nickname: Sophisticated.

Year of graduation: 2000.

“GPI helped me to conquer my shyness. It taught me that women have equal rights as the male counterparts. GPI taught me that sex is not love and made me to believe in myself that I am special and unique.

Name: **Mitchell Onowolu Aituazobe,**

Nickname: Expensive.

Year of graduation: 2000.

“GPI empowered me. It made me to know my rights as a girl-child. Taught me about STDs and STIs. It boosted my self-esteem and taught me the risk involved in abortion.”

Name: **Candy Faith Iriaye,**

Nickname: Candy.

Year of graduation: 1999

GPI has made me to stand out in the crowd. It has made me assertive. I don't have any problem concerning my sexuality. I have dominion over such problems. Now, I can stand in front of a crowd and speak, I could not do this before I joined GPI.

Name: **Okoojion Ose Edewede,**

Nickname: Indispensable Edes.

Year of graduation: 2001.

"GPI has made me to know how worthy I am to my family, myself and to the society at large. I can go anywhere and freely express myself without fear. I have been involved in political activities in my school through the leadership skills I got from GPI.

Name: **Eunice Bello,**

Nickname: Nice "B".

Year of graduation: 2001

"GPI gave me the right information at the right time."

Name: **Omonigho Edoja,**

Nickname: Prudence.

Year of graduation: 2001

"GPI changed a very shy and passive Monica to a bold and assertive Monica and now, with very high self- esteem."

Name: **Monica Oyedoh,**

Nickname: Accommodating Monic.

Year of graduation: 2002

“GPI turned my shyness to boldness that I can now speak in public places without fear. It turned my aggressiveness to assertiveness, took away ignorance from me and gave me enlightenment.”

Name: **Uneimilin Odegua Vivian,**

Nickname: Friendly,

Year of graduation: 2002

“GPI has set the ball of empowerment rolling in my life. The information I gained from GPI helped me in personal situations as well as other girls’ around me.”

Name: **Imhabekhai Mary-Claret,**

Nickname: Creative.

Year of graduation: 2003

“GPI brought out my self-esteem, made me assertive, enabled me to accept my body-image and also to know that I am not and never can be a weaker sex.”

Name: **Emuze Joy Aiyudubie,**

Nickname: Unique.

Year of graduation; 2003

Voices from GPI centre girls

“I have been able to hold on to words I give. My actions don’t, for perceived gender reasons, mean Yes when I

really mean No.”

Name: **Ekwemuka Joy,**

Age: 19 Years.

“The greatest impact of GPI on me is that I can now express my feelings. GPI has brought me out of loneliness. I can now make friends easily and interact with them, without any feelings of inadequacy.”

Name: **Akinola Success Ayo,**

Age: 18 Years.

“GPI taught me how to communicate effectively without arousing resentment. I am now a peer health educator. Recently, I used the information I got from GPI to educate friend on the “ dangers of oath-taking.” Besides, I have set goals for myself and I am working towards achieving them. GPI is truly a home of empowerment for the girl-child.”

Name: **Ruth Ikhide,**

Age: 17 Years.

“The greatest impact on me is on self-realization. Before I joined GPI, I was naive and thought nothing good could come out of me. I now have much to talk on when it comes to discussing issues of sexuality.”

Name: **Uwagie Ero Adesuwa,**

Age: 17 Years.

“GPI has made me morally, physically and socially strong. I have gained important knowledge on the rights and

responsibilities, sexual abuses, Female Genital Mutilation, teenage pregnancy, VVF, etc.”

Name: **Oghogho Idukpaye,**

School: Madonna Modern College,

Age; 17 Years.

“GPI has made me to appreciate my body. Before now, I did not like some aspects of my body, especially my lips. I used to feel that people were laughing at me because of my big lips. So because of that, I did not like talking to my friends because of my lips. Since I joined GPI all of that has changed. GPI has shown me the usefulness in my body and to see my body as special. I had once used GPI information to help a girl in my class who did not know her body - image. She did not know how to calculate her menstrual period but with the information GPI gave to me, I used it to help the girl and she can now know when to expect her menstrual flow. All thanks to GPI.”

Name: **Ese P. Oyovwevotu,**

Age: 15 Years.

“The greatest impact of GPI on me is that it has given me high self-esteem. I now see myself as being unique and specially created. Based on the knowledge I gained from the lecture on assertiveness, I was able to educate a friend in my class who was always quiet, that being passive would make her to lose attention and respect rather than gain anything. Thanks to GPI for enlightening me to enlighten others.”

Name: **Sandra Otibhor Osobhawo,**

Age: 17 Years.

“A personal experience is that I can now communicate in public. GPI has made me to appreciate my body-the way it is and love myself. GPI enabled me to know that for me to achieve any goal I must work towards it. GPI also made me to have a high self- esteem, and the fact that I have high self-esteem does not mean that I should look down on people. The most important thing GPI has done for me is that it made me to know that when I say No to boys, this No should be No and that sex is not the means for showing love. In fact, GPI has done a lot to change my life and I can only say thanks to GPI.”

Name: **Linda Elvor.**

Age: 17 Years.

“GPI came into my life when I needed encouragement. It taught me more about my body and how to be outspoken. These days, I don’t have stress expressing my views on relationships because I am now assertive. GPI also taught me how to avoid unwanted pregnancies and prevent myself from contracting STIs.”

Name: **Aisha Momoh,**

Age: 20 Years.

The greatest impact of GPI on me is that it has helped me to be bold and preach against trafficking in girls. I’m now able to talk to girls about their goals and values and bring

them to GPI. GPI helped me to know how to relate with boys and putting them in their shoes ‘politely’ which has helped me to maintain my dignity as a girl.

Name: **Imaghode E. Ovbokhan,**

Age: 16 Years.

“GPI has instilled discipline in me. It has made great and wonderful difference in my life. I am not shy anymore and can now talk before a congregation. I am now cautious of relationships. I will say that GPI is a place for building up a girl-child and a forum for empowering women.”

Name: **Uzzi Ehizemen,**

Age: 13 Years.

“GPI has given me the opportunity of learning leadership skills and skills to start a trade; how to write reports and minutes as well as how to chair meetings.”

Joy Ephraim.

“Before I became a GPI girl, I hated some parts of my body, which often made me to feel inferior. But when I started, changes occurred and I discovered I was okay with all I have. GPI helped me to build up my self-esteem and to be assertive and not to be aggressive. Before now too, I was not allowed to discuss any topic on sex education with my parents because they believed I was too young for that. But when I started at GPI I was told that it is better to educate

a child on sex matters in order to enlighten and broaden the child's knowledge. GPI has helped me to be able to communicate with other girls and even the opposite sex."

Blessing Olumese.

"Before I joined GPI, I was always longing to be circumcised, but I was to learn later of the harmful effects of FGM. I will always say No to Female Genital Mutilation. I feel proud because I am now empowered and I can stand out proudly and confidently and say No, to violence against women, wife-inheritance and son-preference."

Ekanem Eyo Nsa.

"I did not know my rights and I could not even express myself in public. I was good at keeping my problems to myself, feeling that nobody has gone through such problems but a thorough orientation at GPI convinced me to be proud of my body as a girl-child. I have learnt how to express my feelings, especially when I am in difficulties. I now know my rights and responsibilities as a girl."

Rachael Ebie.

"I can remember clearly when I first heard about HIV/AIDS, my reply was, "why are you telling me about AIDS, do I look like somebody that can contract the disease, abeg, leave me alone", it was until I joined GPI, that I realised and knew that AIDS is a respecter of nobody."

Vivid Idan.

“In my own case, I was neither enlightened nor empowered, I thought that feminists were trouble-makers and I believed that a woman who sees her menses should not go to church and that all women can keep records naturally. But these are all myths (I have found). Joining GPI has brightened my future. GPI has helped me to feel comfortable with parts of my body. It has made me to know all about my sexuality. Also, I can now say no to harmful traditional practices such as Female Genital Mutilation.”

Blessing Ikharebhore.

“I had low self-esteem, couldn’t express myself in public. I had then even believed that HIV/AIDS was a white man’s disease. I had a very negative body-image and knew nothing about my body - not until I joined GPI. I now know that I have rights as well as responsibilities. I can talk freely about sexuality, including sex, because I know it’s only through talking about sex that you know more about it. I have high self-esteem. I have acquired a lot of skills: I can write articles and reports, communicate freely, carry out research, write and present papers at seminars. I can also make soda, detergent, tie-and-dye and I can also make snacks. GPI has become part of my daily life. I cannot do without talking about it. I can boldly say now that I am empowered.”

Blackkie Faith Evbuomwan.

“When I was not a member of GPI, I was very aggressive to people whenever I was annoyed. But since I joined GPI I have ceased to be aggressive. I am rather now assertive and

I was also fond of criticizing certain female wears. But GPI has made me to know that women can dress the way they like and that this should not call for rape. I am delighted that GPI has taught me everything about my sexual health; how to set sexual limits, have rights over my body and to know the consequences of FGM.”

Queen E. Okonoboh.

“I have learnt a lot in GPI and I’m very proud to be a girl. Before I joined GPI, I did not know that being a female child could be rewarding. When I did not know anything about women’s rights, I always told my friends how I wish I were a boy, that God should have made me a boy! I said all these things out of ignorance because my rights as a girl in the society were neglected. But after joining GPI I came to know, not only my rights as a female child, but also what my future could be as a woman. (It’s not an easy thing to be a female child).”

Eno-Obong Roland.

“Sexuality information for every young girl is a must, so parents should note. More than half of the cases of unsafe abortions, unwanted pregnancies, and incidence of STIs among young girls is caused by ignorance about their sexuality and most especially, reproductive health and rights.”

Arit Okon.

“I did not know there was any easy way out for someone to handle any problem without the help of a man until I joined GPI.”

Janet Ukpong.

“I was totally ignorant of so many things about me. I was passive and shy. I could not make friends with people worth making friends with, because I had very low self-esteem. I could not stand up for my rights as a girl-child and was often told that as a female child I had no say in the society. But all of this has changed now.”

Elizabeth Bassey.

“Our society being a patriarchal one does not allow women to think positively of themselves. The society makes them believe that they should be dependent and because of this, they are oppressed and subjugated. But GPI has taught me to think positively about myself. GPI has given me sexuality education as well as reproductive health and rights, raised my self-esteem and made me to understand that I can survive on my own without depending on a man. GPI has taught me basic skills, including writing and communications. I’m now aware that I am not a second class citizen and above all, GPI made me to realise that I am part of this society and so, can contribute to the growth and development of my society.”

Violet Nwaneri.

How GPI came to Akwa Ibom

“In trying it out it always meets the yearnings of adolescent girls i.e. the GPI newsletter. This was the only source of information until GPI physically came to Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

“In July 2000, Prof. Bene Madunagu, Co-ordinator, GPI Calabar and Uyo Centres came to select some teachers for training as facilitators in 10 secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The first training on sexuality issues was during the GPI Gender Development Institute programme in which 10 teachers, including myself were involved.

“On our return, we started training 30 girls in each of the schools and the lessons held twice a month. A follow-up training of the teachers took place in the year 2001 in Calabar on sexuality education. According to the co-ordinator, the training was to enable the teachers to impart information on sexuality issues to adolescent girls in the various schools.

“The co-ordinator did not stop at training the facilitators for outreach lessons alone, she further opened an office in Akwa Ibom State at No. 205 Aka Road, Uyo in January 2003, where the facilitators and members of the public could meet and also to get information. The centre girls were picked from different churches and schools to ensure wider awareness.

“So far, GPI Uyo Centre has held many activities such as skills training, career development tours for girls, media workshop for media practitioners, debate, quiz and essay competitions for outreach and centres girls as well as boys and girls forum, seminar on trafficking in girls, training of secondary school teachers in the 31 local government areas of Akwa Ibom State on sexuality education, etc.

With the creation of awareness and sensitization through these activities, GPI has come to stay in Akwa Ibom State.

“Bravo to Professor Bene E. Madunagu! Bravo to GPI!

Charity Wilson Etukudo
GPI Centre, Uyo.

Voices of facilitators

GPI has made me a shining star

“I was fortunate to be picked as one of the teachers for training as GPI facilitator. After the training, I can now associate and approach issues in a positive manner without being biased. I now lead people without fear, tolerate certain things and engage myself all the time, without listening to gossips. This is why I am ever grateful to GPI.”

Charity Wilson Etukudo
Facilitating Co-ordinator, GPI, Uyo.

Shyness gone forever

“Speaking out in the public among adults was a problem before I joined GPI as a facilitator. I still remember when it was my turn to teach at the women fellowship. Though I had prepared myself for it, I would contemplate how I was going to face the crowd. The same was applicable when I was called to face the panel to defend my thesis in school. My heart skipped and I thought about how I was going to face them. I came out sweating profusely due to fright and shyness.

“I was really thinking of how I will overcome shyness until the day my principal called me and asked me to attend GPI training at Calabar. The training exposed me to many things that I had earlier been made to believe. This boosted my confidence and gave me boldness.

“In one of the training sessions, I was made to participate in a group work and I was asked to present the group work. I summoned courage and did it successfully and from that day, shyness was gone forever.

Indeed, GPI has taken away my shyness and I will forever be grateful to the co-ordinator and facilitators.

Elizabeth L. Akpan

GPI, Uyo, Centre.

Voices from GPI outreach schools

“GPI was introduced to the students of Community Comprehensive Secondary School, Four Towns, Uyo in September 2001, after Mrs. Etuk and Angela Peters came back from a training programme in Calabar. I noticed that

the weekly training programme of students has made them better informed and educated. They became empowered and could teach life management skills.

“Before this time, female students registered more in the arts than the sciences. They saw science subjects as solely reserved for boys because they were presumed to be very difficult to study. But there is a reverse in the trend of events as female students now compete more in the sciences and the registration of courses in the external examination has revealed more female students in pure sciences and further mathematics than the male counterparts.

“In distributing responsibilities and leadership roles, there is now equal number of female and male students as prefects, since the school is co-educational. This shows equal opportunity is given to both sexes. The girls are now bold and equipped with communication skills with which they now use to fight for their rights. Those who used to be shy and could not express themselves in the public now do so very confidently.

“The students have been empowered through education and information. They dress neatly to school, having learnt personal hygiene. They can make bags, baby food, etc, through self-reliance skill training programmes, organised for them at the GPI Centre. This knowledge will help them in future when the need arises.

“Excursions to organisations in which GPI students were exposed to greatly created career awareness amongst them, thereby exposing them to the world of work. This should be encouraged and more students should be involved

as they will no longer stumble into occupations. GPI has ensured that they are properly guided into making wise decisions for themselves.

“The GPI students are now gender-conscious and sensitive. Their language has changed drastically when issues are addressed. You can hear them shout “chairperson” where “chairman” is mentioned.

“The Parents / Daughters’ Forum also helped to involve parents in the most important aspect of the education of their ward on issues of sexuality. Parents now draw closer to their female children to promote their rights. The Boys/ Girls Forum also afforded the students the opportunity of interacting with each other and thereby creating a healthy relationship and competition in debates, essay writing and drama.

“Finally, it is good to note that there is a remarkable difference in the life style of GPI girls and non-GPI girls in their physical appearance; the way they speak, etc. I also would like to appeal that more girls should be empowered as the number of girls in GPI is quite an insignificant figure to effect a significant change in the behaviour of students. The population of female students for example is 2000 here, while GPI girls are 100.

Louis N. Edet

Principal,

Community Comprehensive Secondary School, Four Towns,
Uyo.

“The GPI as an organisation has really boosted the morale of the girls in Adiahaobong Secondary Commercial School, Eniong Offot, Uyo. They have learnt teamwork, discipline and respect. The girls are no more shy. They are able to express themselves openly. The girls now know their rights and can stand up for same. The girls can now readily tell you what sexually transmitted diseases are. They also know much about HIV/AIDS and can even lecture non-GPI members on same. The girls know how to handle relationships and how well prepared they should be when they have a date. I’m very impressed.”

Vivian Afangideh (Mrs.)

Principal,

Adiahaobong Secondary Commercial School, Eniong Offot, Uyo.

“From the on-set of GPI in Uyo High School, the two trained facilitators by GPI for the school have been having regular sessions with the girls on Thursdays after school. The girls have participated in drama competition, which Uyo High School once came first. The girls also took part in essay competition held at Noval Hotel, in which they took 3rd position. The girls have equally taken part in other GPI programmes such as Boys /Girls Forum, skills training. It is believed that what they learn from GPI will help them in future to be independent and to maintain their self-esteem. With these, we hope to have a better world for our girls.”

Effiong E. Udoefy

Vice-Principal, (Academics)

Uyo High School..

“It is about two years now since the Girls’ Power Initiative was introduced in this school. I have observed a gradual demonstration of self-awareness among the girls. GPI has created a sudden self-consciousness among the girls. This has also led to a greater protection of self among the girls. This is a positive development, since these signs will help to curb incidence of rape among our girls. I feel GPI programme should continue here.”

B. I. Ukpabio

Principal, ESCS.

“The one thing that has ever brought pleasant changes in our students’ behaviour is the GPI programme. It is my pleasure to say that I am very happy that this programme has come into existence. And its operation is actually creating an impact in the life and behaviour of our young girls. It is more or less the talk of the school and the girls actually love it.

“Firstly, the programme has helped to make the girls to know who they are, and what they are, thereby empowering them to become what they want to become in pursuit of their life ambition. Before this time, they were vague, aimless and empty without focus. Young girls in this dilemma are bound to go astray and become prey to men. The most pleasant development is that they have a goal now and are working for its achievement. It is wonderful joy to watch this phenomenon in them.

“Secondly, several excursions organised for them

have exposed them to various careers they can go in for. With their life ambition in focus, they can reach heights unlimited and achieve greatness and be beneficial and productive citizens of this great nation.

“Thirdly, the skill training has gone a long way to help them acquire various skills for their mental and social development and maturity. Skills such as card-making, sewing of shower caps, taking care of homes in the absence of parents and many others are such that will improve their talents and keep them off the devil’s workshop. These skills will definitely keep them busy, especially during holidays and even after secondary school time and consequently they will be useful to themselves, their parents and the society at large.

In conclusion, GPI programme is the best thing that has happened to our young girls. By placing them in the wheel of progress and sound academic, social and economic foundation, the initiators of this programme deserve a pat on the back and applause for a job well done. This programme should be established in all secondary schools and technical colleges, to help our young girls grow in the context of modern technology. Skill development centres should be established to take care of the unfortunate ones not in secondary schools and technical colleges.

“The future of our young girls has automatically become sure and bright with the entrance of GPI. Street-trotting, aimless *waka about*, forced prostitution, child abuse, child slavery, child-labour and many other vices will

become a thing of the past. A new era for young girls of this generation has emerged. Thanks to GPI."

Dr. U. S. Agoye

Vice-Principal,

Federal Science and Technical College, Uyo.

Voices of outreach school girls

"GPI has taught me my rights in the society. It gave me high self-esteem and showed me my rights as a girl and a growing woman. It gave me the courage to face the future."

Name: **Ikediashi Blessing,**

Age; 17 Years.

School: F.G.G.C.

"GPI has really shown me a lot of things. It has helped me to discover my abilities. It has made me to know that ignorance is a 'killer disease.' GPI is a great organisation that a female child should pass through."

Name: **Oyadoyin Becky,**

School: Baptist High (Senior) School.

"I have come to know myself and how to express myself whenever I am in the public. GPI has made me to understand that as a female child I still have my rights in the society. GPI has really brought me out of darkness. I am now enlightened in the sense that I now know everything I need to know about my sexuality and gender equality. GPI has brought me out of my ignorance. Thanks to GPI for making me to be who I am today."

Name: **Udeme Sophia Udoh,**

School: Baptist High School.

“This rare organisation has empowered me to be able to advise my fellow students and other people around me. It has helped me to express my feelings and also to love myself. It has helped me to know myself and finally, it has helped me to know how to talk in public.”

Name: **Okoro Philomena,**

Age: 18 Years.

School: New Era College.

“GPI has convinced me not to be shy but to open up to people and express my feelings. GPI has made me to assert my rights and stand for them against all odds. GPI is a fun-loving club which educates girls on sex education.

“GPI’s greatest impact in my life is in the effort of self-rediscovery.”

Name: **Sheidu Oluwaseun A,**

Age: 16 Years

School: F.G.G.C.

“I can now appreciate and love myself more. Before I joined GPI I used to think of myself as low, because of the spots on my legs. But after the teaching from GPI on self-esteem, I decided not to bother. After that decision I made, I started going up in my social life. I am so grateful to GPI.”

Name; **Ewodage A. Zainab,**

Age: 15 Years.

School: New Era College.

“GPI has created a great impact on me ever since I had a chance to join it. GPI taught me to be bold and to be able to talk in a congregation. GPI also showed me how to feel good about myself. It also enlightened me on how to

maintain my body. It made me to be an empowered girl and a leader of tomorrow.”

Name: **Elizabeth Idugboe,**

Age: 18 Years.

School: Evbareke Senior Secondary School.

“The greatest impact of GPI on me has been my ability to feel good. In fact, I suddenly knew all about puberty the moment I was introduced to GPI, and it has taught me to be a decent and well-behaved girl.”

Name: **Obasuyi Gladys.**

Age: 16 Years

School: Evbareke Senior Secondary School.

“Since I became a member of GPI, I have been able to share my, feelings and problems with my parents and friends, which I could not do before. I have now known how to take proper care of myself. GPI has also taught me not to have low self-esteem and to assist others whenever they need my support or advice.”

Name: **Agbonile Augustina**

Age: 15 Years.

School: St. Maria Goretti Girls School.

“By becoming a member of GPI, I have been able to live a healthy life and I’ve achieved full potentials and have acquired so many management skills as a leader of tomorrow. I now know so many risks like teenage pregnancy, rape and

sexual exploitation, that I can never be a victim of.”

Name: **Enoghama Mercy**,

Age: 17 Years.

School: St. Maria Goretti Girls School.

Voices of community leaders

“Since GPI first came to my community to carry out an enlightenment programme on effects of fattening room and female circumcision, I have so far, not received invitation from the villagers to attend any fattening room ceremony. So, I believe that to some extent, a lot of people of Ikot Nakanda are not circumcising their female children.”

Chief Oyo Ubeng Oyo Ita of Ikot Nakanda

“With boldness and authority, I am saying that the people of Esuk Mbat have stopped the illegal act of FGM. I told my chiefs and even passed the same information during our council meeting that female circumcision is wrong and unlawful and that anyone caught carrying out this act will face the law.”

Chief Okor of Esuk Mbat Community.

Chapter 6

MAJOR GOALS FOR FUTURE

Girls' Power Initiative, GPI remains focused in its programmes and hence, plans for scaling up education, training and information to adolescent girls, aged - 10-18 years on issues of sexuality, sexual and reproductive health and rights. It is, therefore, committed to addressing its vision of building a strong and empowered feminist institution with critical consciousness and capacity for analysis of social, economic and political issues from a gender perspective, aimed at positive changes and transformation of patriarchal values in Nigeria.

Thus, our major goals still remain:

- Advocating for the understanding of adolescent girls and civil society of the essentiality of sexual and reproductive health and rights to the agenda for gender justice and democracy.
- Promoting adolescent health and human rights, especially, sexual and reproductive health and rights of adolescent girls from a gender perspective, particularly in Southern Nigeria.
- Developing a mass of empowered and critically conscious women leaders in Nigeria.
- Promoting gender equality and equity in Nigeria.

Chapter 7

THE GPI TEAM

Members of Board of Trustees

Prof. Eka I. Braide

The Board of Trustees Chairperson is a professor of parasitology, with special emphasis on epidemiology, public health at the department of zoology, University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria.

- Vice Chancellor, Cross River State university of Science and Technology - CRUTECH
- She is a former Facilitator, South-East zone of Nigeria Guineaworm Eradication Programme, (NIGEP), 1987 - 1988 and member, National Steering Committee, National Onchocerciasis Control Programme, (NOCP), Nigeria from 1990 till present.
- Prof Eka Braide was also a member, Cross River State Task Force on Cholera Control; 1991-1994, and currently member, University of Calabar Senate.



- She has been engaged by UNICEF since 1987 in various consultancies as well as by WHO as a consultant and facilitator since 1998 till present and she has equally received awards in 1997 and 2000 from the government of Cross River State for contributions to the development of the state.
- She is also the Chairperson, Youthcare, an NGO that offers skills training support to underprivileged and differently able youths.

Prof. Bene E. Madunagu

Bene Madunagu is a professor of botany at the University of Calabar in Nigeria.

- She co-founded Women In Nigeria, WIN in 1982. She is also a co-founder and Chair of the Executive Board of Girls' Power Initiative.
- She is an activist and grassroots campaigner for political, economic, social, sexual and reproductive health and rights of girls and women in particular.
- She is the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Calabar International Institute for Research, Information and Documentation, (CIINSTRID) which operates a non-sexist programme for Conscientising Nigerian Male Adolescents.
- She is the Chair of the Board of the International Centre for Reproductive and Sexual Rights (INCRESE) and a member of the Board of Trustees of Reproductive Health Matters, (RHM) and Youth Care Organisation.
- Bene is a human sexuality educator, trainer and consultant and she equally co-ordinates the South-East zone of the Nigerian chapter of the International Reproductive Rights Research Action Group, (IRRRAG) and member of the Technical Advisory

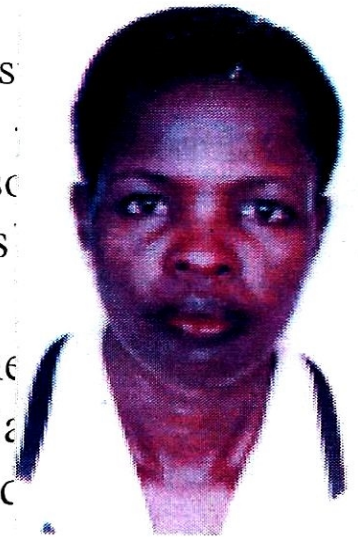


Committee, (TAC) of AMANITARE as well as holding the membership of AMANITARE'S International Policy Monitoring Working Group.

- Bene Madunagu is the Anglophone Africa Regional Coordinator of DAWN, and current Chairperson of BAOBAB for Women's Rights and newly appointed member of the Board of Directors of IPAS in North Carolina, USA, and co-director/chair of the Nigerian Partnership for Safe Motherhood (NPSM)

Mrs. Grace Idaehor Osakue

- Grace is a school principal in a first class secondary school in Benin City, Edo State of Nigeria and also coordinates GPI's Edo/Delta States Centres.
- She holds B. Ed, History from the University of Benin, Nigeria (1980) and trained as gender and development resource person, (Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF) 1992.
- She is the National Coordinator of the International Research and Reproductive Rights Action Group, (IRRRAG), Nigerian chapter and is also a trained para-legal activist.
- Grace is an educationist and sexuality educator (sicus) and she is equally the secretary, GPI Board of Trustees.



Prof. Ogoh Alubo

- Alubo is a professor of medical sociology at the University of Jos, Nigeria.
- He was a MacArthur grantee of the Fund for Leadership Development, (FLD).
- His research in the FLD project was on “Sexuality: Challenges Among Girls in Higher Institutions.”
- He has written books on medical sociology and is from Benue State and currently on sabbatical at Nigerian Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, (NIPSS) Kuru, as the head of the research department.



Florence Adeyanju Asemota, PEN, was born on 8th May 1939 and became a member in 1997.

She holds the following qualifications:

B.A. English, 1963

PG Dip Ed, 1965

M. Ed, curriculum studies, 1979,

M.Ed, education planning, 1982.

Mrs Asemota is a retired school principal, having served at the Ife Girls High School, Ile-Ife, 1972-1974; Imaguere College, Benin, 1974- 1985, Idia College, Benin, 1985-1994. She is school proprietor and Chair, Board of Directors, CETA International Schools, also an awardee of the highest professional award for teachers, Principal Emeritus of Nigeria, (PEN) and an author of many books.



Mrs Asemota also received the distinguished alumnae award from the University of Nigeria Alumni Association in 2001.

Her hobbies are writing, counselling, and making life better for others.

Mrs. Ayo Atsenuwa

- Mrs Atsenuwa teaches law at the University of Lagos, specialising in criminal law and human rights and is a British Chevening scholar and a consultant to the United Nations system.
- She holds a Master's degree in law, law and development from the University of London and Warwick University.
- She is the Executive Director of Legal Research and Resource Development Centre, 386 Murtala Muhammed Way, Yaba, Lagos and is currently engaged in formalization and integration of reproductive rights and maternal health into the legal education curriculum in Nigerian universities.



Mrs. Juliana Nathaniel

- Mrs Nathaniel is a trained nurse/midwife, currently the Bauchi Vision Field Office Manager and Behaviour Change Communication Coordinator.
- She has been a consultant to UNFPA from 1997 to 1998; JHU/PCS USAID, 1992 - 2001; Society for Family Health, 1998; STOPAIDS, 1994 -2001 USAID Mothercare Project on Life Saving Skills Formative Research, 1992 to 1994 and different UNICEF projects from 1998 to 2000.
- She has been part of a team that developed IEC materials, posters, T-shirts, leaflets and training manuals for UNICEF on HIV/AIDS. Mrs Nathaniel is from Bauchi State.



Other members of Calabar Centre

Surname:	Bassey
Other names:	Ekanem Ekpo
Date of birth:	17th February, 1954
Sex:	Female
Marital status:	Single
Religion:	Christianity
Local government:	Odukpani
State of origin:	Cross River

Qualification: Diploma in Adult Education (Women Education, 2000).

Designation: Programme Administrator, (Counselling and Skills Training).

Responsibility:

- Facilitator, weekly lessons
- Unit head, Counselling
- Head, Outreach Programme
- Member, Facilitating unit
- Member, Project Execution Team
- Member, Programme Advisory Management Committee (PAMC)
- Member, Publications Committee
- Member, Resource person - Skills
- Trainer.



Skills: Excellent public speaking and communication skills; gender analytical skills; professional sexuality educator, counselling skills, sewing, craft-making skills, etc.

Hobbies: Reading, sewing, horticulture, movies, listening to music and dancing

Surname:	Ekott
Other names:	Imoh Bernard
Date of birth:	September 30th 1972
Sex:	Female
Marital:	Married
Religion:	Christianity
Local government	Ikono
State of origin:	Akwa Ibom State
Nationality:	Nigerian

Qualifications:

B. Ed. (Adult Education/Community Development), 2000.

Diploma in Business Administration
1995, Computer, Application, (1999).



Designation:

Programme Officer, (Youth Development).

Responsibility:

- Facilitator, weekly lessons
- Facilitator, GPI outreach programme
- Head, facilitating and training unit

- Co-ordinator, Youth Development, Alumnae and
- Internship Affairs
- Resource Person/Trainer
- Member, GPI Research and Publication Committee
- Member, GPI Project Execution Team (PET)
- Member, GPI Office Management Committee (OMC)
- Member, Library Committee
- Currently representing GPI as resource person on advocacy and lobbying for PD and RH concerns in
- Nigeria at the UNFPA 5th Country programme.

Skills: Facilitating, programme design and implementation, writing, listening, advocacy and lobbying, conflict management and resolution.

Hobbies:

- Reading, working with young people and women, listening to music and walking.

Name: **Ekpoudom, Ofonasaha**
Sex: Female
Date of birth: December 14, 1967
Local government: Utu Etim Ekpo
State of origin: Akwa Ibom State
Nationality: Nigerian
Marital Status: Married.

Qualifications: B. Sc. Home Economics, Diploma in Computer Studies

Designation: Facilitator/Personal Asst. to the Chairperson, GPI Executive Board.



Responsibility:

- Facilitating, weekly educational sessions
- Assisting the chairperson in human and material resource management
- Member, Advocacy Programme Management Board
- Member, Project Execution Team
- Member, Publications Committee
- Member, Skill Development Unit
- Member, Networking Unit

- Head, department of administration
- Member, Financial Affairs and Account Department
- Member, Facilitating Internship and Alumnae Affair Department
- Member, Department of Public Affairs and Policy
- Member, Committees for Programme Planning and
- *Execution of Activities.*

Skills: Facilitating, report writing, research and analytical skills,
Interactive communication, training, advocacy and management skills.

Hobbies:

Imbibing and sharing new ideas, reading, information technology development

Surname:	Utak
Other names:	Owoidoho Okon
Sex:	Female
Date of Birth:	June 30, 1967
Marital status:	Single
Home town:	Uruk-Usoh, Otoro
Local government:	Abak
State of origin	Akwa Ibom State
Qualifications:	Higher Diploma (Bus Admin.).

Designation: Assistant Accountant, Head of maintenance unit.

Responsibility:

- Facilitator
- Supervisor, Uyo Centre/outreach programme
- Analyzing/preparation of financial returns
- Report writing
- Secretary, Advisory Programme Management Board
- Supervising the security maintenance unit.



Skills: Facilitating, organising and writing.

Hobbies: Reading, and travelling.

Name:	Victoria Effiom Edet
Local government	Akpabuyo
State of origin:	Cross River State
Date of birth:	25th May, 1974
Year of employment:	November, 1996
Position in the organisation:	Facilitator.

Responsibility:

- Facilitate GPI educational programmes on sexual, reproductive health and human rights issues as well basic life management skills
- Secretary, Project Execution Team
- Member of the counselling and home visit team
- In-charge of the monitoring and evaluation unit
- Supervise the youth corner at GPI outreach schools
- Perform any other assigned roles by the organisation
- Member of research community intervention team against harmful traditional practices, 2001 - 2003.



Skills:

- Facilitating skills;
- Counselling
- Monitoring and evaluation skills
- Rapporteurship
- Advocacy and networking skills

Hobbies:

Writing and reading, cooking, making friends, playing with children and singing.

Surname: **Bassey**
Other names: **Ndodeye Ofem**
Date of birth: 23th August, 1974
Sex: Female
Marital status: Single
Religion: Christianity
Local government area: Yakurr
State of origin: Cross River State

Educational Qualifications

B.Sc. Political Science (1997),
Diploma in Computer
Studies and Application, (2000), PG
Dip, Management (2003).



Designation:

Assistant Programme Officer, Re-
search/Media and Policy

Responsibility:

- Facilitator, weekly lessons
- Facilitator, GPI outreach programme
- Assisting in coordingating GPI television programmes
- Secretary, GPI publication committee

- Secretary, GPI editorial committee
- Member, GPI computer unit
- Member, facilitating unit
- Member, GPI Project Execution Team (PET)
- Member, GPI Management Committee (OMC).

Skills:

- Facilitating,
- Research and analytical skills,
- Writing, listening, public-speaking, typing,
- Singing, and acting.

Hobbies: Reading, listening to young people, swimming, travelling, watching movies and making friends.

Surname: **Kanu**
Other names: **Helen C.**
Date of birth: 13th July, 1972
Marital status: Single
Religion: Christianity
Local government: Oyibo
State of origin: River
Nationality: Nigerian

Qualification:

HND, Town and Regional Planning.

Designation:

Assistant Programme Officer,
Counselling and Networking.



Responsibility:

- Facilitator, weekly lessons
- Facilitator, GPI outreach programme
- Member, facilitating unit
- Co-ordinator, staff seminars
- Member, Project Execution Team (PET)
- Secretary, Office Management Committee (OMC).

Skills: Facilitating, writing listening, typing, counselling.

Hobbies: Interacting, helping destitute, learning, reading, listening to music, working with young people.

Name: **Margaret C. Afangideh**

Date of birth: September, 14 1968

Sex: Female

Marital status: Married

Religion: Christianity

Local government: Abak

State of origin: Akwa Ibom State

Nationality: Nigeria.

Qualifications: SSCE, undergraduate

Designation:

Account Assistant, Library Supervisor
and Facilitator.

Responsibility: Facilitating, accounting
and library supervision



Hobbies: Sport and travelling

Surname:	Udo
Other names:	Margaret Samuel
Sex:	Female
Date of birth:	9th September.1975
Marital status:	Married
Local government:	Ikono
State:	Akwa Ibom
Nationality:	Nigerian
Religion:	Christianity

Qualification: Bachelor of Arts (B.As)
Linguistics

Designation: Facilitator.

Responsibility:

- Member, Monitoring/Evaluation Unit
- Facilitating weekly meetings
- Member, Counselling Unit
- Member, Media Committee
- Daily event registering
- Member, Office Management Committee
- Member, Staff Seminar Committee
- Member, Skill Training Unit
- Outreach facilitator.



Skills: Facilitating, reporting, presentation, counselling.

Hobbies: Reading, singing and listening to music.

Surname: **Arit Etim Okon**
Date of birth: 1st January, 1978
L. G. Area Calabar Municipality
State of origin: Cross River State
Marital status: Single
Qualifications: B. Sc., Social Work
Certificate in Computer
Operation

Designation: Secretarial Assistant
and Computer Operation

Date of employment: April 1995

Hobbies: Reading and travelling.



Name: Inyene Regan Emah

Date of birth: March 9th 1974

Local government: Ibiono Ibom

State of origin: Akwa Ibom

Marital status: Married

Qualifications: GCE Diploma in Computer Studies

Designation Administrative Assistant/
Computer Operator



Date of employment: October 1996

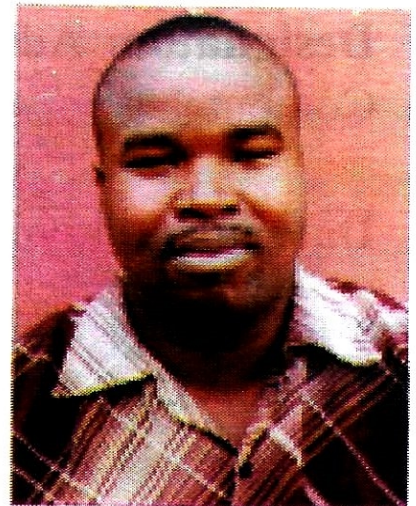
Hobbies: Reading and travelling

Surname:	Ebeka
Other names:	Etuk Udo
Sex:	Male
Date of birth:	1968
Marital status:	Married
Local government:	Ukanafun
State:	Akwa Ibom
Nationality:	Nigerian
Religion:	Christianity

Qualification: Primary Six Certificate

Designation: Security Officer

Responsibility: Security.



Surname:	Emmanuel Michael Akpan
Date of birth:	June 26, 1983
Marital status:	Single
Religion:	Christianity
State of origin:	Akwa Ibom
L. G. A. of origin	Obot Akara
Nationality:	Nigerian.
Qualification:	SSCE
Designation:	Administrative Assistant

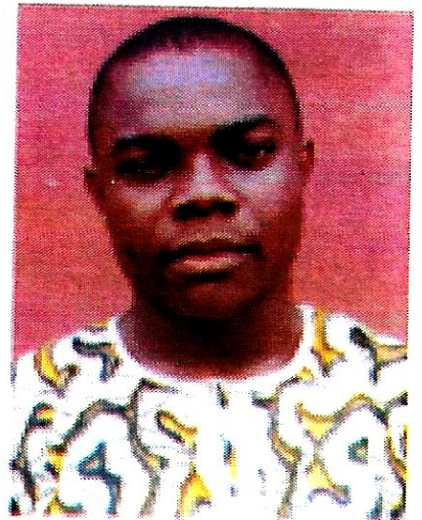
Responsibility:

Assisting in the administrative and maintenance unit.

Skills: Computer operating.

Hobbies:

Reading, swimming and athletics.



Surname: **Okpe**
Other names: **Micheal**
Date of birth: 13th August, 1983
Marital status: Single
Local government: Obudu
State: Cross River
Nationality: Nigerian
Qualification: SSCE

Designation: Security Officer

Responsibility: Security



Hobbies and Skills: Singing and reading

Surname:	Okpa
Other names:	Theresa John
Date of birth:	29th September, 1985
Sex:	Female
Marital status:	Single
Religion:	Christianity
Local government	Yakurr
State of origin:	Cross River State
Qualification:	SSCE/NECO, (2002)
Designation:	Youth Facilitator.

Responsibility:

- Co-facilitating weekly lessons
- Facilitator, GPI outreach programme
- Receptionist
- Member, GPI Project Execution Team (PET)
- Member, GPI Office Management Committee. (OMC)



Skills: Writing and reading skills as well as art designs.

Hobbies: Reading, listening to music, watching movies and swimming.

Surname: **Ekong**
Other names: **Ukeme-Obong Albert**
Date of birth: 31st October, 1984
Marital status: Single
Local government: Ibesikpo Asutan
State: Akwa Ibom
Nationality: Nigerian

Qualification: SSCE(2000)

Designation: Youth Facilitator.

Responsibility:

- Co-facilitating weekly meetings
- Receptionist
- Record-keeping.



Skills: Acting, football, singing and reading.

Hobbies: Facilitating, baking.

Surname: **Mbong**
Other names: **Anwan Gabriel**
Sex: **Female**
Marital status: **Single**
Date of birth: **6th August 1983**
Date of employment: **5th January, 2004**
Designation: **Youth Facilitator.**
Qualification: **SSCE**

Skill:

Leadership skills, report writing and facilitating.

Hobbies:

Reading, singing, dancing and praying



Other members of Benin Centre

Name: **Ikoghode Phil Abuyeki**
Date of birth: 3rd October, 1970
Year of employment: 1st June, 1999
Designation: Office manager.

Educational institutions attended and qualifications

Ambrose Alli University, (AAU), Edo State: B. Sc, Business Administration
Lagos City Computer College: Diploma in Computer Science
Crown Bilingual and Secretarial Centre,



Lagos: Diploma in Basic Secretarial Studies and
Idia College, Benin - City: W.A.S.C

Duties

- See to the welfare of the office
- Oversee supplies and stores
- Oversee telephone and computer communication and any other duties assigned to me by the co-ordinator
- In charge of graduation, end of year activities as well as awards to graduands and other distinguished persons.

Hobbies:

Travelling, photography and reading.

Name: **Amadasun Ese**

Date of birth: 26th June, 1976

Year of employment: 1998

Designation: Admin. Assistant.

Educational institutions and qualifications

O.N.D, Secretarial Administration, College of Technology, Benin.

Accounting Education Student,
Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma.



Duties

- Computer designs
- Computer maintenance
- Internal administration
- Development and maintenance of GPI website.

Hobbies:

Reading and movies

Name: Ohonba Iyen-Oghogho
Date of birth: 19th March, 1965
Year of employment: 1997
Designation: Facilitator.

Educational institutions and qualifications

University of Benin, Edo State B.Ed:
English Language

College of Education, Ekiadolor,
Benin-City: N.C. E, English/French



Duties

- Facilitator in-charge of schools outreach,
- Excursion,
- Facilitate at GPI centre and outreach school as well as sexuality training.

Hobbies:

Singing and listening to music

Name: **Joy Ogbomo-Omorede**

Date of birth: 25th May, 1969

Year of employment: 1999

Designation: Facilitator, Research

Educational institution and qualifications

University of Benin, Benin-City: B.Sc.
Zoology, 1992

University of Benin, Benin City: M.Sc.
Fisheries, 1997.



Duties

- Facilitating
- Research assistant
- Coordinate centre meetings

Hobbies:

Reading.

Name: **Osagiobare Tina Itohan**

Date of birth: 2nd September, 1973

Year of employment January 2001.

Designation: Facilitator

Educational institution attended and qualification

B. Sc. Biocheminstry, Ambrose Alli University, Edo State.



Duties

- Facilitating at GPI centre and out-reach schools
- Counselling and home visitation
- Member of editorial team.

Programme planning (Youth talent festival, “take our daughters to work”).

Hobbies:

Travelling, reading and music.

Name: **Obazuwa Maria**

Date of birth: 13th May, 1957

Year of employment: 2002

Designation: Facilitator

Educational institution and qualification

H.N.D (Tourism), Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna.



Duties

- Officer in charge of skills training department
- Facilitator; New Era College and Excel Group of School.
- Officer in charge of trafficking network
- Member, newsletter editorial board
- Member, research team.

Hobbies:

Reading, travelling and cooking.

Name: **Ehiaguina Blessing**
Date of birth: 30th April, 1970
Year of employment: 2002
Designation: Facilitator, (Counselling and
Legal Aids).

Educational institutions and qualifications

Edo State University, (A.A.U) Ekpoma,
(B.Sc).

Obiaza Girls Secondary School, Ubiaja.

Ewohimi Girls Secondary School,
Ewohimi (WASC)

Central Primary School, Ubiaja.

Duties

- Counselling and social intervention
- Seeking for legal aids if any case demands
- Facilitate in both outreach schools and at the centre meetings.

Hobbies:

Singing



Name: **Anyafulu Okaja Roselyn**
Year of employment: 2002
Designation: Facilitator, Monitoring and Evaluation.

Educational institution and qualifications

B. Sc, Public administration
Diploma in Personnel management.



Duties

- Monitoring and evaluating the impact of GPI programmes on GPI girls, their parents and the public.
- Prepare quarterly, annual and other reports on activities and programmes.
- Facilitate in some outreach schools and supervising GPI alumnae association.

Hobbies:

Advocating for social change in our society. Reading, cooking and listening to gospel music.

Name: Ejodiame Isimeme Lucy

Date of birth: 5th November, 1981

Year of employment: 2004

Designation: Intern



Educational institution attended and qualification

Student of the microbiology department of the University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria.

Duties: Administrative

Hobbies: Reading and jesting

Name: **Nasamu Mercy**

Date of birth: 12th May, 1975

Year of employment: 15th February, 2003

Designation: Librarian

Educational institutions and qualifications

Diploma in Banking and Finance, University of Benin.

Senior School Certificate Examination,
Army Day Secondary School, Auch.



Duties

- Library stock-taking
- Shelf-reading
- Book-lending

Hobbies:

Reading, singing, cooking and dancing

Name: **Okoojion Ose Edewede**

Date of birth: January 11th, 1987

Year of employment : 2003

Designation: Intern.

Educational institution and qualification

Senior School Certificate Examination,
Itohan Girls Grammar School, Benin City.

Duties

- I facilitate at outreach schools.

Hobbies:

Singing and reading



Name: **Pearl Irene Osakue**

Date of birth: 13th April, 1982

Year of employment: 1998

Designation: Part-time facilitator

Educational institutions and qualifications

Diploma in Social Work, University of Benin, Benin-City, 1999

Final year student, department of sociology, Abia State University, Uturu.

Duties

- Facilitate at of GPI lessons during school holidays and execution of any other responsibilities assigned to me.

Hobbies:

Travelling, reading and singing.

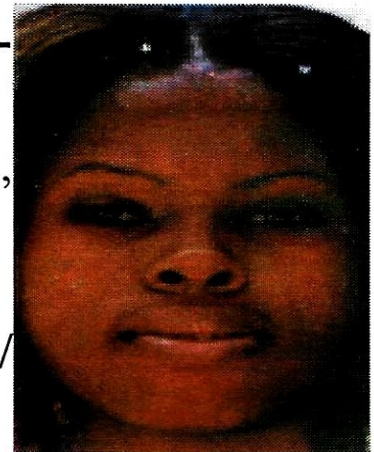


Name: **Unobe Ene Christabel**
Date of birth: May 23rd, 1983
Year of employment : March, 2002
Designation: Youth Facilitator (Part time)

Educational institutions and qualifications

Liberation Academy Group of Schools,
S.S.C.E. 1998

University of Benin, Faculty of Law, 1999/
2000-2005.



Duties

- Facilitate at GPI centre meetings.

Hobbies:

Singing, reading, dancing and travelling.

Name: **Edoja Helen Omonigho**

Date of birth: 5th March, 1983

Year of employment: 2003

Designation: Intern.

Educational institution and qualification

Senior School Certificate Examination, (S.S.C.E), Baptist High School, from 1995 to 2001.

Duties

- Assisting in various administrative duties
- Facilitating.



Hobbies:

Reading and discussing with friends.

Name: **Ozokwere Victoria**

Date of birth: June 27th, 1982

Year of employment: November, 2001

Designation: Intern.

Educational institution and qualification

WAEC/SSCE; Obadan Mixed Secondary School, Benin-City.



Duties

- Facilitate in rural areas and also to supervise all such related programmes.

Hobbies:

Reading, travelling and dancing

Name: **Uzoma Augustine**
Date of birth: 22nd January, 1978
Year of employment : 1998
Designation: Security Officer (Day).

Educational institutions and qualifications

Ordinary National Diploma (OND),
College of Technology, Benin.

Undergraduate at the University of
Benin.

S.S.C.E, Urhokuosa Mixed Secondary
School.



Duties

- Security
- Reception

Hobbies:

Reading and music.

Members of Uyo Centre

Name: **Charity Wilson Etukudo**
Sex: **Female**
Age: **44 Years**
Local Government: **Eket**
State: **Akwa Ibom State**
Nationality: **Nigerian**

Qualification

First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC), Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE), Teacher's Grade II, Certificate (GDII); Associate Certificate in Education (Age): National Certificate on Education (NCE); BA.(Edu)



Responsibility:

- Prepare lesson notes and reports as well as the supervision of administrative assignments.
- Plan for activities and keep office imprest and ensure judicious expenditures.

Designation:

Coordinating facilitator, Uyo Centre, Akwa Ibom State.

Skills:

- Facilitating
- Designing and printing of textile materials
- Drawing
- Painting
- Teaching

Hobbies

- Cooking
- Farming
- Sewing
- Reading
- Travelling
- Singing
- Dancing
- Swimming

Name: **Elizabeth Lionel Akpan (Mrs)**
 Date of birth: 69 Orok Close, Uyo
 Year of employment: 24th June 1965
 Local government: Abak
 State: Akwa Ibom
 Nationality: Nigerian.

School	Qualification	Date
Hillside International Nursery School, Calabar, C.R.S	F.S. L. C. (Primary)	1976
Holy Child Secondary School, Ikom, C.R.S	WASC 'O'Level	1982



University of Calabar	B.A. (Hons) Religion	1988
University of Calabar	Post-graduate diploma in education	1992
University of Calabar	Master's, Education (Curriculum studies)	2000

Designation:	Facilitator (Coordinating facilitator - outreach)
Responsibility:	Moderator, skill training programme
Skills	Communicating, facilitating, counselling, computer literacy, sewing.

Work experience

Ahoada High School, Ahoada, Rivers State - N.Y.S.C	1988 - 89
Post-primary school management board, Calabar	1989-92
University of Calabar International Secondary School	1997-99
Secondary education board, Akwa Ibom State	2000 till date.

Hobbies

Reading, basket ball and current affairs

Name: **Eno Raymond Eyo**
Sex: Female
Age: 26 Years
Local government: Uruan
State: Akwa Ibom State
Nationality: Nigerian

Qualifications: First School Leaving Certificate, SSCE and N. C. E. (Eng/IBL).

Responsibility:

- Facilitating GPI sessions
- Counselling
- Visiting GPI Centre Girls' Parents.



Designation: Assistant Coordinating Facilitator (Uyo Centre)

Skill: Typing, cooking and sewing

Hobbies: Reading and movies

Name: **Angela Ifiok Peters**

Sex: Female

Age: 41 Years

Local government: Ukanafun

State: Akwa Ibom State

Nationality: Nigerian

Qualification

B.A. (Hons), Theatre Arts

Designation:

G.P. I Out-reach facilitator

Assistant Co-ordinating facilitator

Skills: Fashion-designing

Hobbies: Reading



Name: **Eno Aniema Uwah**
Date of birth: August 5, 1979
Sex: Female
Local government: Uyo
State: Akwa Ibom State
Nationality: Nigerian
Religion: Christianity
e-mail: nollygee@yahoo.com

Educational Qualification

Bishop Haywoode's Primary School

Atan Offot, Uyo - FSLC 1990

Holy Child Girls's Secondary

School, Ifuho, Ikot Ekpene, SSCE(O/L)
1996

University of Uyo - Diploma (Pub
Admin) 1996



Designation: Administrative Assistant

Responsibility:

- Maintenance of the office
- Attending to library users and any other duty assigned me by the coordinating facilitator of the centre.

Skills: • Decoration • Sewing

Hobbies: Reading, travelling

Name: Okon Moses Ukpabio

Sex: Male

Age: 42 Years

Address: Afaha Etok Ibesikpo

Local Government: Ibesikpo Asutan

State: Akwa Ibom

Nationality: Nigeria

Educational qualification	Date obtained
FSLC	1963

Designation: Night security

Assigned role in GPI: Surroundings cleaning and night security.

Skill: Farming.

Hobbies: Reading, walking.



Members of Asaba Centre

Name:	Ehita Ikoghode -Aikpitanyi
Date of birth:	27th January, 1971
Year of employment:	1996
Designation	Deputy Co-ordinator, GPI Edo/Delta State Head Asaba Office

Educational institutions attended, and qualifications

B. A., Philosophy, Edo State
University, Ekpoma 1991

Post-graduate diploma,
Public Administration -
University of Benin, 1991.



Duties

Co-ordinator of GPI, Delta State.

Hobbies:

Reading, travelling, women's rights activism, story-telling.

Trained sexuality educator, Siecus, 1995

Name: **Ojo Ayotunde Oluwuseyi**
Date of birth: March 31st, 1978
Year of employment: March 2003
Designation: Facilitator: Legal aid/
Counselling.

**Educational institutions attended
and qualifications**

B.A (Hons) History, University of
Ilorin: 1998- 2001

Unity Secondary School, Oye-Etali:
1991 - 1996

Abubakar Tatari Ali Polytechnic,
Bauchi; 1997.



Duties

- Legal aid/counselling department
- Facilitate at outreach schools and during centre meetings
- Research and documentation
- Library.

Hobbies:

Reading, travelling, listening to good music.

Name: **Edem Augusta Chukwuekwu**

Date of birth: 24th October, 1976

Year of employment: November, 2003

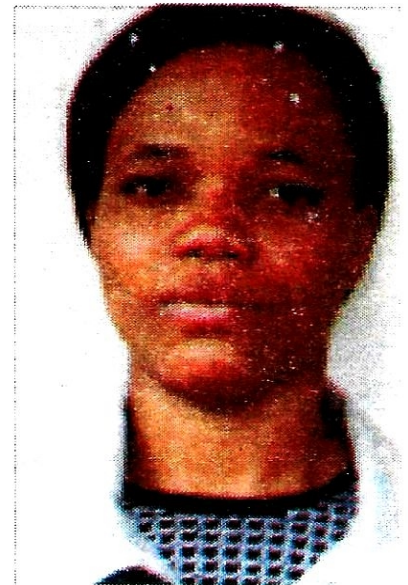
Designation: Facilitator: Monitoring/
Evaluation.

Educational institutions and qualifications

HND, Federal Polytechnic, Oko.

St. Augustine College, Ibusa

Owina Primary School, Benin - City.



Duties

- Monitoring/evaluation
- Facilitate at outreach schools and during centre meetings
- Programme planning (Youth talent festival, “take our daughters to work”).

Hobbies:

Volley ball, reading and listening to good music.

Name: **Toyin Ajayi Okungbowa**
Date of birth: 1st March, 1976
Year of employment: 2nd February, 2004
Designation: Account Officer.

Educational institutions and qualifications

Ambrose Alli University (AAU) Edo State

B.Sc., Accountancy
University of Port Harcourt
O.N.D in Accountancy

Paragon Comprehensive College, Benin-City: W.A.S.C.



Responsibility

- In charge of accounting
- Ensure bi-annual and annual financial reports.

Hobbies

Travelling and reading.

