

RWTH 386

INFORMATION BULLETIN

(Updated)



GIRLS' POWER INITIATIVE GPI NIGERIA

"towards an empowered womanhood"

Calabar, Nigeria

June 1996

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WHAT IS GIRLS' POWER INITIATIVE?

GPI is a non-governmental, non-profit making, body seeking to equip girls for development and participation, and consequently for healthy womanhood.

The initiative arose from the realisation that a serious constraint to the achievement of the total emancipation and inclusion of Nigerian women in the development process has been the difficulty of breaking through the patriarchal norms and values internalised by women during childhood and adolescence.

GPI addresses the Rights and Health Education needs of girls between the ages of 10 and 18 years a critical age-group that has so far received little or no attention when compared with the large numbers of non - governmental and governmental organisations addressing the issues of women and infants.

PHILOSOPHY: The GPI recognises the right of girls to survival, effective protection, development and participation.

The Initiative believes that these rights cannot be achieved in the present circumstance where the Nigerian society hardly acknowledges their relevance.

We further believe that achievement of the overall goal of women's emancipation from their present problems of poverty, ignorance, disease and subjugation can only be fully realised if the rights of girls are protected, girls are healthy and mobilised for development.

MISSION: GPI is a national organisation prompting the health, human rights, sexuality and reproductive health and rights and self reliance skills and needs of girls especially between the ages of 10 and 18 years from a gender perspective through education, information and communication, counselling and community intervention.

AIM: The primary aim of the Girls' Power Initiative is to promote the rights of girls and mobilise them for development and participation through education and relevant study.

VISION: A strong and empowered national Feminist organisation with critical perspective on social and gender prejudices and committed 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.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- a) Assessing and documenting current understanding and knowledge among girls on human rights concepts, health issues and employment.

- b) Exploring and clarifying human rights, health and gender issues.
- c) Conducting Education sessions on health, human rights and empowerment.
- d) Disseminating new knowledge on experiences and ideas about health, human rights and empowerment.
- e) Publishing and disseminating relevant information through leaflets, a newsletter, pamphlets, books, videos, films etc.
- f) Conducting essay competitions on relevant topics on girls' health, human rights and empowerment.
- g) Forming Girls' Power Initiative groups of 10 - 20 members each and a GPI club with wide membership.
- h) Net work with relevant groups.
- i) Effective representation and participation in local, regional and international fora on issues of health, human rights and empowerment.
- j) Holding meeting and counselling sessions with girls.
- k) Assisting girls to identify and critically examine issues of gender prejudices and consequently design and implement actions towards changing sexist social values.

PROGRAMME

- GPI has
- developed curriculum for information, education and communication (IEC) on sexuality and sexual and reproductive health and rights of adolescent girls
 - developed a resource center of relevant literature and materials
 - set up a system of networking with other similar youth-serving organisations
 - produced newsletter for expansion and IEC
 - trained girls and personnel in areas of sexuality, sexual and reproductive health and rights.
 - developed and sourced for IEC materials for the resource center and for distribution to members.
 - expanded from initial 2 groups of 6 - 9 members to 5 groups with present membership of over 200.
 - established out reach in - school GPI groups in 5 Secondary Schools
 - maintained publicity through media such as electronic and print.
 - benefited from external funding from IWHC and is currently expanding funding base.

STRUCTURE

A coordinator is in charge of each centre and is assisted by skeletal office staff.

Meetings and activities with the groups are held at the offices.

There is a technical committee of researchers and experts in various areas of concern to the rights and health of girls.

A Board of Trustees comprising gender sensitive persons who are involved in activities for positive change advise the co-ordinators.

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