



Sephamid
Bridge Foundation
Your Health, Your Freedom.

adolescents, their **health** and their **future.**

*Helping adolescents to be duly informed
and equipped with best health practices*



Acronyms

ASP - Adolescent School Program

BSi - Back to School Initiative

CES - Comprehensive Sexuality Education

FMOH - Federal Ministry of Health

HIV/AIDs - Human Immune Virus / Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

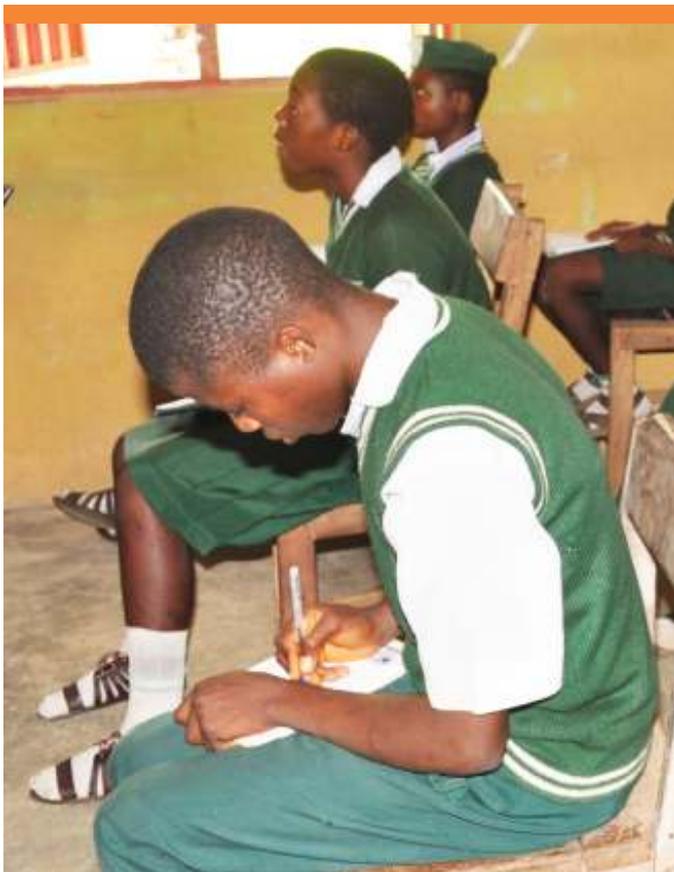
SBF - Sephamid Bridge Foundation

SRHR – Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

STIs - Sexually Transmitted Infections

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This report is based on advocacy carried out by Sephamid Bridge Foundation (SBF), a non-governmental organization advocating for the rights and development of adolescents and preparing them to be duly informed about their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

The advocacy project otherwise known as Adolescents School Program (ASP) took place at Ilejemeje Community High School, Iye-Ekiti.

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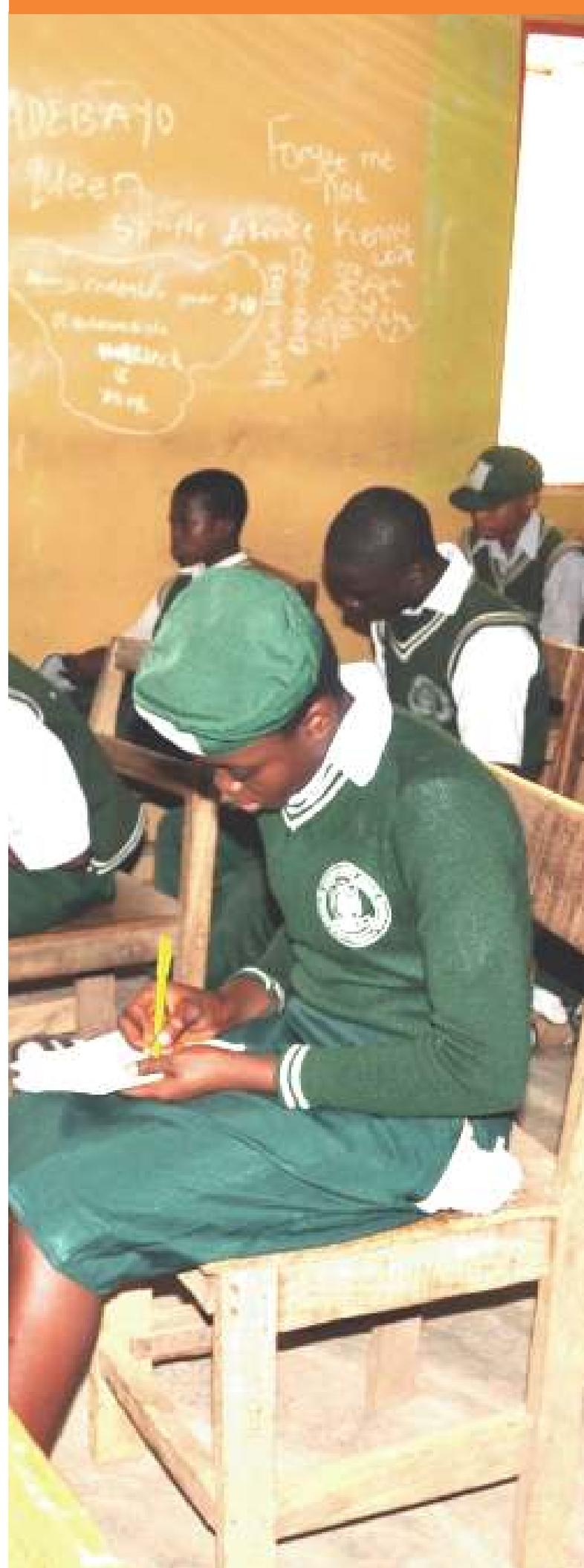
Acknowledgment

Sephamid Bridge Foundation (SBF) is most grateful to the Ekiti State Ministry of Education for granting us permission to commence our advocacy project and the representative of the Ministry of Health's presence to monitor the event gladdens our heart, for which we are grateful.

We acknowledge the cooperation and support received during the programme from Ilejemeje Community High School's Principal and Health Teachers.

Also, we commend the efforts of our Coordinator, facilitators and volunteers especially our Ekiti Team - Temidayo Ayeni, Olumide Aluko, Olalekan Jolasimi, Mirian Peters, Silverline Worgu, Shola Arinola, Rasak Abdullahi and also our friends from African Youth Initiative on Population, Health and Development (AfrYPoD), Dr Laz Eze and Ms Jennifer Amadi.

In conclusion, we say a big thank you to the students of Ilejemeje Community High School for their cooperation, attention and responsiveness during the programme.





Executive Summary

Half of the world's population today - over 3.5 billion people - is under 30, and mostly living in developing countries². Sephamid Bridge Foundation (SBF) believes that young people, especially the adolescents are valuable citizens and investment in their future means prosperity for the society. They represent majority of Nigerians unemployed youths with neither education nor vocational training, especially with the experience of teenage pregnancy; a situation that take them off school.

With the Sustainable Development Goals taking a more focus on adolescents, SBF seeks to tackle the burning issue of the youths to health and education through the Adolescent School Program (ASP) to educate and sensitize students on best health practices in preventing increasing cases of teenage pregnancy, substance and drug abuse which contribute hugely to the alarming school drop out of young girls. During adolescence, girls come across barriers and specific unattended reproductive health challenges of entering and staying in school, this situation goes a particular long way to worsen economic instability for young girls in rural communities by limiting their chances for a better life.

In a nutshell, all adolescents require a suitable and comprehensive sexuality education to be informed and give them opportunity to engage in healthy relationships.

“Adolescent sexuality is a reality! Today's young people reach physical maturity earlier and marry later. Society has a responsibility to ensure that they make responsible sexual choices.”

Prof. Olikoye Ransome-Kuti,
Former Minister of Health

Introduction

In 1994, the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo called for universal coverage of sexuality education⁵. Today, many adolescents are ignorant about matters concerning their health and survival and if urgent and pragmatic efforts to educate them on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) are not considered, this egregious ignorance could be transferred into adulthood.

Various stakeholders tend to withhold reproductive health and sexuality information from young people mainly as a result of negative traditional and socio-cultural beliefs³. The outcomes of these in terms of social and health often lead to high rate of unwanted pregnancies, maternal mortality, STIs, and increasing number of school dropouts among others. SBF's Adolescent School Program aims to educate, sensitize young people on SRHR with the knowledge and relevant information needed for best health practices among the adolescents.

Through the implementation of this project, SBF mentors many young people, girls and boys in Ilejemeje Community High School Iye-Ekiti through capacity building to promote healthy behavior among the adolescent; offering best ways teachers and parents can engage with them. SBF believes every community should be seen living a healthy life, and can only be made possible through guidance on various social and developmental issues. Through series of community- school outreach programs; interactive seminars, drama and play-lets, health clubs, to effectively promote healthy relationships, increasing access to information on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

“I am almost blaming myself not to have started this type of programme”- Mrs. Adewemimo Tolulope from School and Adolescents Health Unit, Ministry of Health, Ekiti State shows how important the program is to the development of young people in the state.



Miriam Peters,
a microbiologist, talks on 'Self Esteem'

Sensitization

Life-long attitudes and behaviour patterns are formed in adolescence therefore, addressing their needs will have positive consequences for them now and throughout their lives.

Self Esteem

Identify your values and let them guide your behavior...set the tone for the first session of the program, as Miriam Peters, a microbiologist, talks on 'Self Esteem'.

According to her, self-esteem is the beliefs and feelings that one has about oneself and it affects our motivation, attitude and behavior. In her words, weak self-esteem is when one lacks self-confidence, and healthy self-esteem as having confidence and good feeling about oneself.

She encouraged the students to enhance their self-esteem by accepting themselves, identifying their strengths and weaknesses and set realistic goals among others.

Initiation of Sexual Activity and Consequences

It's more than damaging for the adolescents to be having sexually transmitted infections at their early age...

Jolasinmi Olalekan, SBF Programme Officer, highlighted the consequences of going into sexual activities early in life as both psychological and emotional injury, including the exposure to early unwanted pregnancy, unsafe induced abortion and STIs, HIV/AIDS. He admonished the students to avoid going into early sexual activity because it could alter their lives negatively and make them experience unsettled life.

Finally, the students were sensitized on HIV as the virus that causes AIDS by fighting and destroying the immune system of human being, he encouraged avoidance of sharing sharp objects not sterilized and premarital sex.

To prevent transmission of HIV and other STIs, abstinence - is the only 100% effective way, he concluded.

Unwanted Pregnancy and Unsafe Induced Abortion

In fact, in a study of adolescent pregnancy in rural Nigeria, 80 percent of pregnancies to unmarried girls were unintended compared to six percent of married girls³.

SBF volunteer, Olusola Arinola, an educationist, shared her experience and talked enthusiastically to the students on the consequences of unwanted pregnancy and encouraged them not to be a victim. In Nigeria, induced abortion is illegal, also pregnant unmarried girls are also forced to leave school. Early pregnancy also carries more serious health risks, especially if the girl is not fully grown, she concluded.



Substance abuse, sexual violence and abstinence

Drug abuse has multiple negative effects on a student's academics from continual absences to poor grades...

Temidayo Ayeni, SBF Coordinator, an educationist, in his word explained the consequences of substance and drug abuse which often leads to death, absenteeism in school, low grades, mood swings, depression, and encouraged them to shun drug abuse.

He also spoke on sexual violence as he explained the meaning of sexual assault and rape while urging the students to avoid abusing others and protect themselves from being sexually abused, assaulted and violated.

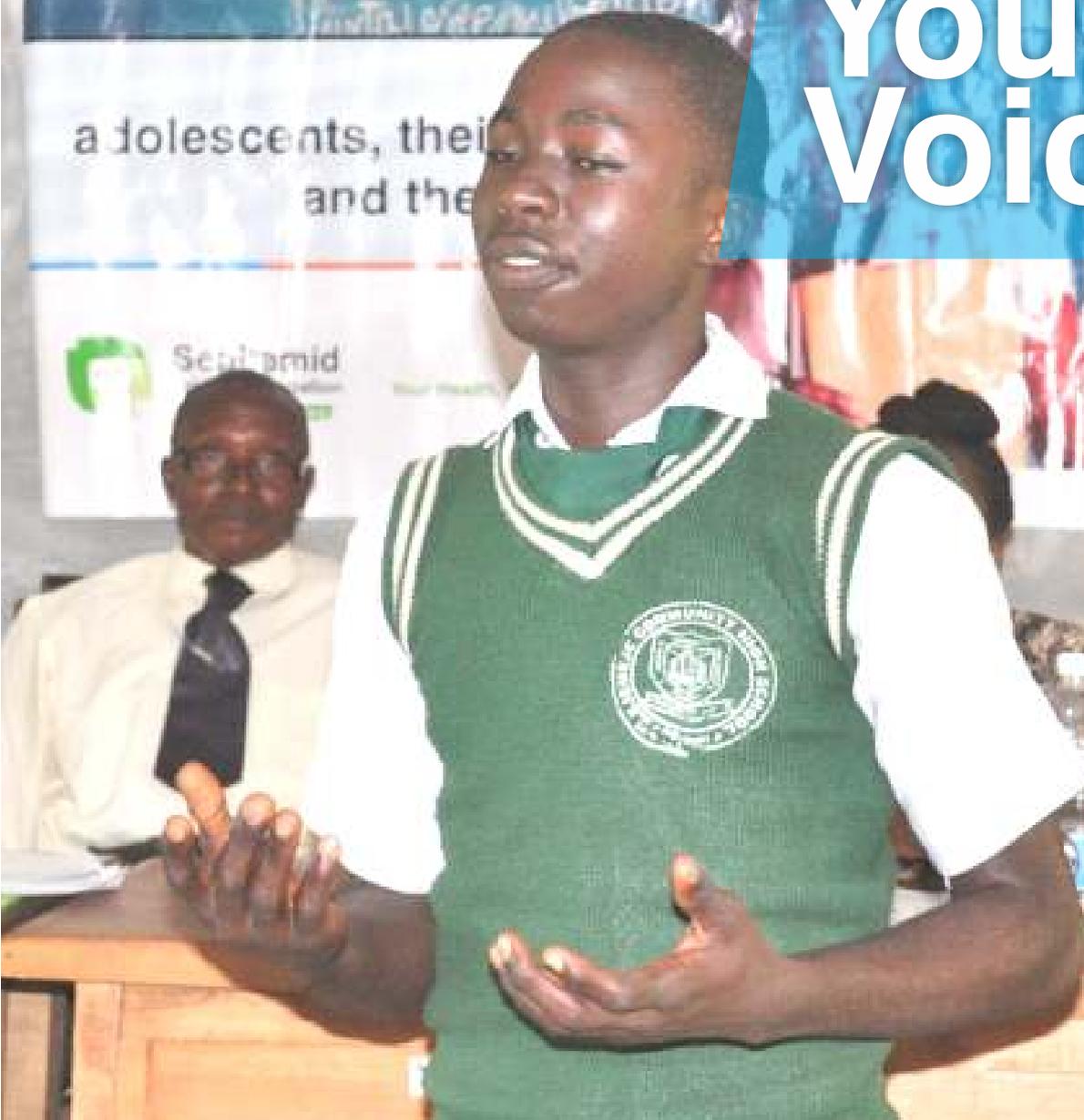
He concluded by emphasizing on abstinence which is the focal point of all other topics of the ASP. He said abstinence will help them to develop an understanding of commitment, faithfulness, and relationship that will serve everyone suitably as the foundations of a healthy marital life in the future.

“I believed strongly that the students' orientation towards sexual activities and abstinence has changed and now they can make informed choices on their health and social activities.”

Mr Anifaloba O,
Health Teacher,
Ilejemeje Community High School, Iye-Ekiti.



Youth Voices



Jacob Benjamen
Ilejemeje Community High School Head Boy

Young people are powerful spokes people for their issues and agent of change who can transform their community for better. Some of the youth voices were captured through an interview session, coordinated by the team member of SBF.

They spoke extensively on commitments; on how to keep themselves from being sexually abused, and to build a healthy self-esteem, being assertive; saying a big '**NO**' to any sexual advances made to them from the opposite sex and '**Abstinence**' to be their watchword.

Lessons Learned & Challenges



Owusun Oluwadunsin, Head Girl, Mr Temidayo Ayeni, SBF Coordinator and Jacob Benjamin Head Boy

Lessons Learned

- We learned that conducting a pretest and post-sensitization test is important to measure knowledge increase after the program.
- We learned that many students embraced and are willing to be enlightened on sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- We learned that educational souvenirs (exercise books with adolescent tips) has informatory effect on the students.
- The Project should be extended to larger percentage of students across the state.

Challenges

- There was no previous knowledge of sexuality education among students.
- Inactive and slow responses from the key stakeholders.

Conclusion

Adolescents may not constitute 100 percent of our population but they certainly make up 100 percent of our country's future¹.

“There is no other way to influence our live without this type of program that speaks to our needs, to prepare us for a bright future; enlightening us on crucial health issues that affect adolescents in society”

Ms Owusun Oluwadunsin,
Ilejemeje Community High School
Head Girl

There is no gainsaying that, this Ilejemeje Community High School outreach program has not only sheds more light on sexual and reproductive health and rights but also helps to recognize the importance of information and education with respect to adolescents' health and social activities in schools as a means of training adolescents to have accurate knowledge and positive attitudes towards their sexuality and behaviour.

Next Steps

- We are determined to reach out to thousands of adolescents in Ekiti State through ASP, bringing up the issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people to the priority of decision makers, relevant stakeholders by building awareness and momentum for their health needs.
- We have developed a strategy to carry out pre and post-sensitization test to determine the quantitative analysis impact on students.
- We are collaborating with Ministries of Education and Health, school authorities for continuing sensitization and assessment through establishment of school health clubs.



Annexure

Event Photos



References

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