

*Sierra Leone Home Economics
Association*

REPORT

OF

TWO SEMINARS

ON

ADOLESCENT PROBLEMS

AND

RESPONSIBLE LIVING

April 1979

February 1980

Sierra Leone

- 1 -

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Sierra Leone Home Economics Association wishes to acknowledge the financial contribution made by the American Home Economics Association International Family Planning Project towards this seminar and publishing of the report.

Special appreciation must be given to the following resource persons who gave their time and expertise during the seminar to highlight the pressing problems of youths in Sierra Leone, especially the problem of Adolescent Fertility - Dr Belmont Williams Mrs Marionette Frazer, Mrs Elizabeth Hyde, Rev. Ademu John, Mr Abdul Rahman Kamara and Dr Priscilla Nicol.

We are also grateful to the Principal and Staff of the National School of Nursing for making available their Assembly Hall and facilities during the seminar. We wish also to acknowledge the assistance given by many other persons not named for their unfailing support whenever they are called upon to assist in the Association's activities.

Alberta Wright
President
SLHEA

Pamela Greene
Coordinator
SLHEA

International Family
RECEIVED

JUL 16 1980

Planning Project

2

LET US FACE OUR PROBLEMS!

The following article appeared in one of the local Newspapers in MAY 1979:-

UNWANTED BABY NO. 2 DROWNS

CROWDS thronged the Harbour Police Station last Saturday as the naked corpse of a baby girl washed up from the sea where it was found floating in the area of the Queen Elizabeth II Quay.

The crowd was so thick that police had to hide the baby in a plastic bag after attempts to disperse the crowd failed, before they were able to convey the corpse in a vehicle down to the Connaught Hospital mortuary.

Police were called out by dockworkers who saw the body floating, and a police launch went to retrieve the corpse.

The baby is believed to have been dumped into the sea, the night before.

The cause of death has not yet been ascertained, but police were working on the theory that this is probably the corpse of another unwanted baby.

SOMETHING HAS TO BE DONE!

AS HOME ECONOMISTS WE HAVE A PART TO PLAY!

Best Available Document

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The seminar must be repeated annually for other parents and guardians to have an opportunity to discuss their problems with adolescents and to learn how to relate with young members of their families.
2. There should be more opportunities in future forums in which youths would participate so that both parents and adolescents could discuss the problems and find solutions together.
3. There should be similar discussions in the vernacular languages so that the views and problems of the different tribes in the country are known.
4. Many parents need to have more knowledge on sex education so that they will become more competent to talk to their children and more receptive to the approaches used in the school for the introduction of sex education into the curriculum.
5. The school system must provide opportunities for teachers to help young boys and girls right from the primary school to understand human development and the consequences of sexual relationships during adolescence and before the onset of puberty.
6. Family life education which incorporates sex education and population education concepts should be made a part of the curriculum for schools and training colleges.
7. Problems of teenagers and adolescent fertility should be publicized and discussed over the media so that more people are reached and would therefore appreciate the need to take action or support action that help young boys and girls in school and out of school.

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

or where you find yourself, as long as you are a woman you have to take care of your home - whether you live with your family or alone; you have to take care of your children from the time they are born until they grow up; you have to take care of yourself and how you relate to your partner and other members in the family and community at large.

We are trying to get the Ministry of Education to put more importance on home economics so that boys and girls take some aspects of the subject right from the primary level until they complete schooling. Many young boys and girls do not get to Form 5 or even to secondary school. We need to look at ways in which they could be provided with some basic education that will give them the knowledge and skills they could apply when they drop out of school.

Now, let me briefly tell you about the SLHEA and its activities. The Sierra Leone Home Economics Association was founded in 1965 to help develop the profession and improve the image of home economics. Today, there are many problems of family living of concern to the Association and to home economists wherever they are. There are problems of high infant mortality and child malnutrition in the country; high incidence of sexually-transmitted diseases among youths; high divorce rate; consumer problems in relation to inflation and of course the problem of inadequate housing especially in the urban and peri-urban areas resulting from migration from the rural areas.

The youths of today are giving their parents and teachers lot of problems. They live in a world of their own. Even last week a sixth form boy died as a result of what his peers did to him. Incidents like that continue to happen and as an Association we have decided to address the problems with your help. We have held workshops and seminars every year and each time we focus on a specific area of concern. At this seminar, which is funded by the American Home Economics Association International Family Planning Project, we are going to focus on some of the problems of teenagers and try to find ways in which we can help our youths of today.

This is a one day seminar. We know you are all busy people and cannot leave your homes, markets and families for a longer time. You will realize from the speakers and discussions that we need at least a week to do justice to each problem we shall be considering today. However, we know that our invited speaker and panelists will provide us with enough information on some of the problems they face in their own work that concern adolescents. We shall be discussing in groups in the afternoon and try to find solutions for them within the period available. If we find that the time is not enough to arrive at concrete recommendations and ideas for follow-up, we may consider planning another workshop later.

We are happy to welcome some of our young nurses in training as observers at the seminar. They will find the discussions useful for their own lives as well as their peers and their patients they will be caring for in the future. We are happy in particular to see a few men around. We hope that together we will have a fruitful day and that we will all make some contribution to the deliberations of the seminar.

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

ADOLESCENT FERTILITY IN SIERRA LEONE

Keynote Address : Dr Belmont Williams
Obstetrician & Gynaecologist
Chief Medical Officer.

I must thank the Vice-President of SLHEA for her kind remarks and congratulate the Association for taking the initiative of organizing this seminar on a very important area of concern to all - parents teachers, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Welfare and Ministry of Education in particular.

The age group we are concerned with today is the group of children and youths between the age of 10 and 25 years. When children get to the age of 10, 11, and 12 years certain changes begin to take place in their bodies. Boys begin to have changes in their voice, hair grows on their face, armpits and pubic area. Girls too have hair growth and breast development. But most important thing that happens is that they begin to menstruate. The reason why I have included the age 10 in this group is because I know of 5 of my relatives' children who started menstruating before 10 years of age. Many however, do not start until around 11, 12 or 13 years. This is important to note because some girls have sexual contacts with boys and become pregnant even before they begin to menstruate. Mothers should be made aware of this. It is very important that parents should let their children know about this possibility and the probable consequences of their acts as soon as they reach that age and before they begin to menstruate.

When young girls become pregnant there are two actions that the parents or the girls themselves take. Let us consider these and the implications briefly --:

1. The mother does not know until the pregnancy is well advanced. In fact, many mothers have come to the clinic to find out whether the child's pregnancy could be terminated and when the girls examined they are usually 6-7 months pregnant. In another case that came to the clinic it was the neighbour who hinted to the mother that the child was pregnant and then brought the child to me. That girl in particular was only 14 years old and she was $6\frac{1}{2}$ months pregnant! Nothing could be done! Another girl of 13 years came with her mother with a record of having had four abortions! You can see that this is a serious problem because some of these girls - even if pregnancy is terminated as long as they have started having sexual relationships, will continue to do so. Therefore when the pregnancy is so advanced they just have to go on and have their baby. And, when this happens, it is the mother or grandmother who has to take care of the children - in many cases they cannot afford to take proper care of them.

The girl who decides to go on and have the baby has to leave school until the baby is born. Some people feel they should go back to school after delivery and continue their education because, what people say they should not go to school because they will corrupt the other children. In any case, many do not go back to the same school but go to another area or to the Provinces to another school where they are not known.

The problem I see with this action is that many of them are not able to learn in school and cannot cope with school work and exams. They are sometimes rude and misbehave to unmarried teachers or teachers without children. A few, however, do go to school and make progress. So, much depends on how the situation was handled and the kind of counselling given.

2. Many go to ~~doctors~~ and other health personnel such as nurses, midwives and dispensers for abortions to be performed. If they go to doctors who know what they are doing they may be alright. But many go to persons who do not know how to handle the abortion and many girls have had infection and sometimes tetanus. Some have infections we are unable to treat when

they come to the clinic for help; others are so severe they die. Those who survive the infections may have their tubes and they are sterile for life.

This is serious because when they get married and what children they go around to all the doctors seeking help and also to other countries or use local medicinal treatment to no available want to express here that this is one way doctors make money because our people can spend any amount of money to have children.

Everyone has to decide what is best for their children. I feel that there is less harm done if the girl is encouraged to have the baby because the damage and complications are less than when they try to have abortions.

Another problem of teenage promiscuity is the spread of venereal diseases - gonorrhoea and syphilis. One big problem people forget about is that of cancer of the cervix. We do not know what causes it and there is no cure for it yet. But we do know that young girls who are promiscuous and have frequent relationships with several men are likely to have this disease especially when they begin sexual relationships before they are 18 years. This is because the cervix is not strong enough at that age and rubs off easily.

Even those who have children when they are between 12 and 18 years have serious complications during pregnancy and delivery. One day at the hospital, one after another caesarian sections were carried out on two girls aged 16½ years. They usually have difficult births and more complications. Though many go through this experience without problems we know that it is this age group of girls, below 18, who have more of these complications.

Another problem I want to mention here is that in many cases it is the girls who run after the boys. They phone them, invite or entice them in many ways. We have to caution our girls so that they do not make themselves so free and available. In some cases the girls have become pregnant for school boys as a result of heavy petting. Quite a few have become pregnant for older men. Some of these men are consoled by parents because they give the girls gifts and money and the parents benefit from the relationships. Some mothers encourage their girls to do this. This is a problem for the seminar to consider.

What can we do to help these children? I feel that this meeting is a good beginning because we are all here to consider the problems and accept that they exist. Doctors, teachers, nurses and home economists cannot handle the problems along. Parents must help by finding ways of handling their children at home. Mothers need to gain the confidence of their children and be friendly with them so that the children can go and talk to them when they have problems - especially the girls.

The schools should also try to provide sex education for the pupils when they get to the delicate age. Teachers need to be trained to handle the subject tactfully and to help their pupils to confide in them and overcome these problems. I am sure my distinguished colleagues on the panel will exhaust these problems and concerns during their presentations later this morning.

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

PANEL PRESENTATION

A panel of five speakers under the chairmanship of Mrs Lillian Adesimi Davies gave short presentations (in Krio) on various aspects of adolescent problems in Sierra Leone. Some of the important statements made by each speaker are summarized or quoted as follows:

DR. FRISCILIA NICOL - The School Health Clinic.

Dr Nicol explained the work of the school health clinic and the problems they normally cope with in relation to the subject of the seminar. Using a chart on Human Reproduction she explained to the group of parents and guardians how conception and birth take place. She encouraged parents to talk to their children about menstruation and sex education - especially how pregnancy occurs. She gave them ideas on how to talk to girls and how to talk to boys. She mentioned the case of a young baby brought to her by the grandmother. When she inquired after the mother she learnt that the mother was only 10 years old a caesarian delivery. She emphasized that many children did not know about the results of having sexual contacts with their peers. Many of them experimented because they of what they have been told by their peers. She encouraged parents to talk to the children so that they do not find out for themselves or get tempted to experiment. She also cited a case of a child who became pregnant without having had a 'period' and that the parents could not believe it when they were told that the girl was pregnant.

She mentioned the problems that occur when teenage mother and child grow up together; that at a particular age one cannot tell the mother from the daughter and sometimes there is rivalry for boyfriends. She mentioned the promiscuous behaviour of some young girls and the problems resulting such behaviour. She ended her talk by saying -:

" We will have a healthy nation if our youths continue in this way the nation needs strong and healthy children and they will have a sure future. We have to talk to the children as well as talk to the mothers. On one of our visits to a Co-Ed school little children in Class 7 were misbehaving - some of them were menstruating and had their uniform stained - the boys were teasing them. This is not nice! When children are asked what it meant then, in another school some children were having vaginal discharges which we try to treat. These were small children in the primary school and not in the secondary! So, I am appealing to you parents and guardians to explain to your girls when they are at an age getting to puberty, what it means! If this is done we would not have as many cases of teenage pregnancy and abortions as we do have now. The children will then know what they are going in for, and what to expect. Between the ages of 9 and 17 they must be helped.

I went to a house recently where one girl had just had her baby. She had never had a period and she was 18 years old. So you see, in some case menses begins late. I try to tell mothers to take their girls to the doctor if they have not started menses by the time they are 17 or 18 years old some mothers don't talk to their children because they themselves not understand what is involved in human development and reproduction."

MRS ELIZABETH HYDE - Drug abuse among Adolescents

In her short talk Mrs Hyde tried to explain to the parents and guardians at these seminar the relationship between drug taking and teenage promiscuity and high incidence of teenage pregnancies. In her opening remarks she explained the work of the Association for drug abuse control. She said -:

I must first of all thank the Sierra Leone Home Economics Association for inviting me to speak to you. My talk is specially on the problem of drug taking. In fact, this is a problem most people are ashamed to talk about.

I would like to tell you something about the drug association which we are trying to revive so that we can help our youths. This problem is important because it relates to all the other problems that the other panelists have mentioned. The Drug Association was founded in 1976 and received funding from an international agency for a study in Sierra Leone. Then the association was dormant for a period but we are now bringing it back to action. The name of the Association is National Association for Drug Abuse Control (NADAC).

All of us at some time or the other have used drugs in one way or the other i.e. the medicines we take to make us well again. Some people have a high tolerance level for certain drugs while others have low tolerance levels, because we are different. This business of drug abuse means that one takes drugs so much that one depends on it to be able to do anything. Our concern now is why is it that it is among the adolescents that drug abuse is such a problem? We know that children at some stage of their growth and development are very difficult to control; but this is usually a phase in their lives and they change. The danger The danger is that when children get to that restless age and they want to do what others are doing, that is the age when they are caught into the drug-taking business. Usually, it is the peer group that influences him to try some 'diamba' (marijuana) and to please his companions he gets into the habit. As parents we have to understand that he is trying to please his companions and not his parents. This is the situation. However, it is not only a problem of the youths, Adults too are involved in drug abuse, especially alcohol (local gin-'omole') which is taken excessively by adults and in many cases in front of their children.

The sad aspect of this drug abuse affair is that people are making a lot of money out of it. The drugs are sold and not available free. We are planning a public meeting to which you are all invited, at which doctors would talk about it in more detail, Group therapy will be paid of the programme so that we can talk about this problem as everyone's problem and not a problem for a few"

Mrs Marionette Frazer

"Parents and Guardians, when we say adolescent we mean those who are in between childhood and adulthood i.e. 12 - 21 years. By fertility we mean the person is able to reproduce. Therefore when we say adolescent fertility we are talking about those children between the group I have mentioned and who are capable of having children. This group is of concern all over the world and not only in Sierra Leone. Some came at the age of 14 and request family planning advice. Some men come for contraceptive for the school going wives. This is a big problem and it is the reason why we are here today.

Some mothers are aware that their girls are having sexual relationships but they never say a word and turn a blind eye. Some say that God will protect them from becoming pregnant. How can parents assure God's help when they themselves have not told the children about what it means and the consequences of their acts.

Some of these girls take pills which have not been prescribed. We know that young girls should not take pills. Some boyfriends buy the pill and give to them. In one case the boyfriend told the girl to take two each time they have a relationship and later the girls became pregnant to her surprise. Parents can you see the gravity of the problem and how much it touches the heart?

When they become pregnant some of them seek abortion if they don't want the baby. They go to quacks as Dr Williams said earlier. By the time they come to us their lives are in danger. We save some but quite a few die.

What shall we do for these kids? I feel the problem should be tackled by the home - fathers and mothers; by the school and by the community. When they come to us to deliver they usually have too many problems such as excessive bleeding and difficult delivery and they give us an anxious time. Some parents are ashamed to talk to their children. The father has an important role too to play. They must find time to talk to their children and tell them what to do to protect themselves. They should talk to them in a nice and friendly way not harsh and aggressive. It is also important to give them a moral code and religious faith. Teachers should also help but this is not solely their responsibility, Teachers should comport themselves well so that they are respected by the children. The community is all the different agencies - such as the SLHEA should be involved. This workshop is timely and the SLHEA must be commended for the initiative in establishing a counselling centre when youths could go and talk about their problems if they are not able to confide in their problems if they are not able to confide in their parents. We need more of these counselling centres throughout the country".

Mrs Hyde then gave five reasons for taking drugs -:

- * to escape from something
- * to experience a new pleasurable feeling
- * to make the brain more alert and for clear thinking
- * to achieve a sense of belonging
- * to express independence

She concluded by emphasizing that " They want to show their parents that they have grown up and no matter what they are told they will do what they want to do. Some others dislike their parents and authority so much that they show hostility by doing what they want to do. We have to guard them against reaching the stage when they cannot do without drugs and become restless".

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

MR ABDUL RAHMAN KAMARA - The Planned Parenthood Association

Mr Kamara explained the work of the Planned Parenthood Association of Sierra Leone and the problems of youth that the Association copes with. He ended his presentation by saying -:

"Family Planning is essential for everyone so that people can plan to have children at the time they want them. This is important for our youths to know about so that they can avoid unwanted pregnancies.

The family planning association in this country has been in existence for more than 29 years. The association helps people to have fewer children and to space them well. We encourage people to have the number of children they can care for. By caring for children I mean giving them enough food, adequate clothing and educating them so that when they grow up they can be in a position to care for the parents. Parents should avoid having too many children one after the other and shring them round to other relatives to help them in raising them up and providing the basic needs for these children. In many cases these relatives themselves have their own problems and children to look after; the added child makes the situation worse."

REV. ADEMU MOHN

THE NEED FOR FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

I am pleased to take part in this seminar this morning. What we have heard so far revolves around Family Life Education. In the Church work we find children are going astray but parents are ashamed to talk about their problems. For

example, we are arranging to have a programme for youths on drug abuse and some women were against it. I had to explain the benefits to them. As parents we have to educate out people about all of these problems so that they can face them squarely and together find ways of solving them.

This problem of teenage pregnancy and promiscuity things on inadequate education of youths and even adults on the basics of human reproduction, how to prepare for marriage, what is involved in maintaining happy and stable homes and the prevention of venereal diseases. Youths should be helped to know what they are going in for.

One day a young girl came to baptize her child. She did not know the whereabouts of the father of the child and her mother had to support her and the baby. During my confirmation classes where there are many boys and girls we talk about these problems. They are shy at first but later they open up among themselves and discuss the problems easily.

There are too many teenage fathers without money and too many teenage mothers who do not know how to take care of themselves more so their babies. They indulge in pre-marital intercourse and end up having unwanted pregnancies. Later they seek abortions by all means.

I know of a parent who threw the daughter out of home as she became pregnant. This resulted in serious emotional problems for the child and the family, some fathers also need to be educated. One girl who lived with her father after the death of her mother was unable to do her housework well while she was menstruating. The father forced her to do struacts work even though the girl was physically incapable with cratic. He thought she was pretending and did not even know about menstruation. So you see, we need to educate men in particular.

Finally I would like to give this story of a young woman I saw recently. She was pregnant about 1 month and had a 6 months old baby and mother 2 years old. She said her husband has a job and that he is a tholic by faith. His faith did not permit family planning and he must have as many children as possible.

Well, these are problems that are real and not made up. With these few example I hope I have been able to emphasize the need for family life education not only for our youths but especially for pacious and was in particular".

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

MATERIALS DESTRIIBUTED TO THE PARTICIPANTS

The SLHEA received several publications from the International year of the Child Secretariat which were distributed to the parents and guardians at the Seminar.

Family Planning brochures and leaflets donated by FPIA Family Planning International Assistance were also distributed.

FILM SHOW

The following films donated by FPIA were shown to the group
 Family planning - Cartoon
 Kirathimo - (Kenya)
 NAPPY FAMILY PLANNING (Ghana)

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

SUMMARY OF GROUP DISCUSSION

Each group was asked to identify problem areas of priority, to discuss them and recommend ways of solving them.

GROUP A

1. Parents should focus their interest on their children. The child should be made to feel free to discuss his/her problems with the parent.
2. Parents should set a bright example to the children - especially unmarried women with children. They should not be promiscuous to the knowledge of their children. They should not compete with their children for male friends.
3. Parents should cooperate with teachers in the upbringing of their children. They should do their own bit at home and also visit the schools occasionally to inquire about their children's progress and conduct. They should attend PTA meetings as this is a very important means of communicating with each other i.e. teachers and parents.
4. Some parents allow their children to prostitute themselves because they bring income to the home. There are two kind of children - one group of children can be called "pre-married" i.e. living with their would-be husbands who are responsible for their fees and upkeep until they leave school. The other group is made up of girls under parental or guardian care. It is the former group who tend to lead the other astray because they indulge in sexual relationships with their 'would be husbands. This problem is of grave concern.
5. Parents should establish good relationships with their children so that they do not become difficult and have a feeling of security.

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

GROUP B

1. Sex education is necessary in schools if parents do not take the time and responsibility to teach their children proper behaviour with the opposite sex.
2. Teachers should help and provide early training and education on these matters. They must talk to parents about these problems at the PTA meetings.
3. The educational authorities should look into the problem of school children by themselves.
4. The group shift system of school education has created a lot of problem related to the topic of the seminar. Girls come home late at night after school because of transport difficulties. Some of them have Taxi-driver boyfriends and the implications of this relationship are obvious.
5. Early marriage should be discouraged,

6. The NADAC should hold more meetings with Women's organizations e.g. market women, APC women etc, to enlighten them about drug abuse among children.
7. Too many children are involved with gambling at street corners and back yards as well as with the 'jackpot' machines, The Ministry of Social Welfare should look further into this and take necessary action to prevent gambling by youths.
8. With regard to child prostitution delegations should be sent legal authorities to make laws to safe guard against this practices.
9. There should be more recreational programmes and centres for youths - at least one in each zone of the city and large Provincial towns - so that youths could occupy their time more profitably.
10. Some parents give their children too much 'lunch/pocket money' which they play around with in school and encourage their peers from poorer families to pilfer.
11. The PTA, Organizations, Church groups, United Women's group, the APC women should visit all schools - both boys and girls to get them interested in Family Life Education.
12. The Radio should be utilized more extensively for Spot announcements directed to the Youths and concerning some of the problems raised at this seminar.

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

GROUP C

1. Such school should have a guidance counsellor and there should be one medical doctor for a group of schools.
2. Job opportunities should be made available to youths during the vacation period, especially during the long vacation - so that they are not idle and tempted to do bad things.
3. There is too much gambling going on these days. Children pick -pockets to get money for gambling. Government should invest more on recreational facilities for young children.
4. Children from the Provinces who do not live with parents or relatives are likely to be living with their boy friends and therefore more prone to unwanted pregnancies. Parents who have children living away from home should make periodic checks to see how their children live and who they mix with in the community. There will be no effect however if the Government take an official standing on these problems.
5. drug taking, the Government should prohibit drug taking This is every bodies business and all should be involved - school, PTA, Women's group, Church groups and Market women.
6. Radio spots in the local languages should be broadcast to parents attention.

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

GROUP D

1. In former days there was dread and respect for adults by children. Today, it is the reverse - adults are afraid to scold their children and do not know how to handle them or what to say, Parents and guardians themselves need help and counseling in these matters.
2. Parents should behave and comport themselves properly when their children are around. They should avoid drug-taking, being promiscuous and behaving badly in front of their children.
3. Parents should discipline their children and find ways to occupy their minds when they have nothing to do - such as handicrafts, hobbies, family projects etc.
4. Children should not be allowed to stay out late at night - an age should not be reached when they could go out and stay late unchaperoned. Parents should try to find out where the children go at night - which party, who organizes it, who would bring her home etc? They should check on their children once a while so that they are guarded, knowing that their parents might check on their whereabouts. There is too much laxity with children.
5. One way of helping them is strict religious up-bringing. Children should go to Church or Mosque regularly. If they do not meet their religious obligations they should not be allowed to meet their social needs e.g. parties on Sunday or late Saturday night.
6. Prayer groups for youths should be encouraged and more groups should be formed in each community.
7. Every adolescent girl when going out on a 'date' should bring home someone responsible for her that evening, for parental approval. This is important in cases of accidents on the motor way etc.

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

GROUP E

1. Teenage pregnancy is a burning problem for most parents. The society has changed. According to 'native custom' children at the age of 10-12 years usually marry before they reach maturity.
2. Initiation into native society has also changed. Young girls are financially backed by young men when they go to the secret society for initiation.
3. 'School drop money' is a big problem. Children are given large sums of them to take to school. Some get pocket money from their boy friends.
4. Children bring home to their parents false statements from school some tell lies about their teacher when they know they are not doing well at school. The parents attack the teacher without finding out the truth. This is usually the case when parents condone their children to be promiscuous and the teachers have found out about it. It is always the poor teacher who is picked on if the child does not make progress with her work.

5. Boys have been given too much freedom; They behave like hen before they are fully grown. They want to smoke and drink and drive cars or taxis. They do all sorts of tricks to get the girls. There are quite a few school who are fathers. Parents have to help their boys and girls equally. They should be made to understand the implications and consequences of their actions.
6. Grown-ups are afraid of their children because they usually retort and give cheeky replies when they are approached on any matter of concern.
7. On drug-abuse, idle children are convinced by their friends to use drugs. These drugs are sold everywhere in the country and marijuana is grown in some backyards.
8. Smoking is quite a serious problem among youths. Some even smoke when in uniform. Principals of schools should discipline school children when they are caught smoking in or out of school. Parents should support the schools when this disciplinary action is taken.

oo

7

MEDIA COVERAGE - RADIO

During the seminar there was full average of the key note address and the Panel Presentations. These were recorded and broadcast over the radio during the women's programmes in Krio.

The seminar was also announced over the radio before it was held and was reported during the Network news' of that week. As the discussions and presentations were deliared in Krio, one of the local languages, the whole country was reached through the radio and therefore many more people became are of the problems highlighted and some of the solutions recommended by the seminar.

oo

PARTICIPANTS

1.	Dr P.P. Nicol	20 Little East Street	Panelist
2.	Mrs Guendoline Campbell	12 Upper East Street	Parent
3.	Mrs Matilda Dixon	42 Edward Street	Parent
4.	Mrs Olive Maauley	19, Bpiling Street	Parent
5.	Mrs Malinda Jones	c/o Mothers Union Office	Mothers Union
6.	Mrs Esther Taylor Pearce	" " "	" "
7.	Mrs D. Gilpin-Jackson	40 Kissy Road	" "
8.	Mrs Louisa King	9 Kissy Road	" "
9.	Mrs Lucinder D- Barber	11 Gerbar Land	" "
10.	Mrs Gwendoline Venn	63 Kissy Road	" "
11.	Mrs Evelyn Nicol	113 Campbell Street	Gaurdian
12.	Mrs L. Roach	5A Pultney Street	Parent
13.	Mrs O. M. Cole	c/o Technical Institute	Guardian
14.	Mrs Shola Sanders	Ministry of Health	Social Worker
15.	Mrs Mary King	Under fives Clinic Brookfields	Parent

16.	Mrs Rosaline Gilbert	31 Berwick Street	Parent
17.	Mrs Marian Osborne	83 Kissy Road	Parent
18.	Mrs Bridget Cox	c/o SLBS	Parent
19.	Mrs Rosalind Taylor	12 Prince Street	Parent
20.	Mrs Mabel Wilson	9 Prince Street	Parent
21.	Mr Franklyn Coker	24 Newcastle Street, Kissy	Parent
22.	Mrs Alice Thomas	8, Wilberforce Valley	Parent
23.	Mrs Muriel Davies	51, Motor Rd, Wilberforce	SLHEA
24.	Mrs Christaina Leigh	12, Prince Street	Parent
25.	Miss Jamina Thomas	25 Berwick Street	SLHEA
26.	Mrs Amie Sapattch	75 Soldier Street	Parent
27.	Mrs Alberta Wright	3, Wilberforce Valley	SLHEA
28.	Mrs Ettie George	15, Riverside Drive	SLHEA
29.	Mrs Louisa Thomas	28 Barthurst Street	SLHEA
30.	Mrs Phebean Frazer	Murray Town Road	Parent
31.	Mrs Sophie Yilla	21 Bailey Street	SLHEA
32.	Mrs rene Dougan	32 Wellington Street	Parent
33.	Mrs E. Sandiford	Nat School of Nursing	Parent
34.	Mrs Augustina Mansaray	Nat School of Nursing	Parent
35.	Mrs Onotayo King	Nat School of Nursing	Parent
36.	Mr. David Taylor	27A Low Cost Housing, Kissy	Parent
37.	Mr Patrick A. Vianara	Military Hospital	Parent
38.	Mrs Salur N, Musa	11 Russ St, Off Cir, Road	Parent
39.	Mrs P, Bickersteth	Nat School of Nursing	Parent
40.	Mrs N.A. Frazer	Natland Nursing Home	Panelist
41.	Mrs F. Taylor	Nat School of Nursing	Parent
42.	Mrs E.W. Kawa	Nat School of Nursing	Parent
43.	Mrs M. C. Thomas	6, Kroo Town Road	Mothers Union
44.	Mrs M.C. Webber	89, Campbell Street	SLHEA
45.	Mrs E. O'Reilly Wright	YWCA Voc. Institute	SLHEA
46.	Mrs Oynthia Pratt	Nat School of Nursing	Parent
47.	Mr A Rahman Kamara	Planned Parenthood Assoc.	Panelist
48.	Miss N. Osborne	Nat School of Nursing	Ag Principal
49.	Mrs L. Adesimi Davies	M.M. T. College	SLHRA
50.	Mrs A. Ben Davies	UMC Centre Kissy	SLHEA
51.	Mrs Esther Kabba	APC Womens Organization	Parent
52.	Mrs Hohn Seet	c/o Ola R. Macauley	Parent
53.	Mrs Gladys B. Cole	MMT. College	SLHEA
54.	Mrs Pamela Greene	P.O. Box 414	SLHEA
55.	Mrs J. Aaron Cole	11 Gizborne Lane	SLHRA
56.	Mrs Josephine Cole	5, Lily Road	Parent
57.	Mr M. Bookarie	15 Fourah Bay Rd	Parent

58.	Mrs Anie Samaptha	-	Parent
59.	Mrs V. Gilpin	Nat School of Nursing	Parent
60.	Mrs Audrey Mason	F.S.S.G.	SIHEA
61.	Mrs A. Iscandri	St. Josephs Sec School	SIHEA
62.	Mr Musa Contah	38A Thompson St, Kissy	Parent
63.	Mrs Fudia Kamara	2A Easton Street	Parent
64.	Mrs Mary Williams	9 Annie Walsh Street	Parent
65.	Mrs Mabinty Bangura	31 Fisher Street	Parent
66.	Mrs Meunatu Bangura	12 Wright St, Wellington	Parent
67.	Mrs Adama Sesay	-	Parent
68.	Mrs Yebu Tarawally	1. Peterson Lane	Parent
69.	Miss Amba Harris	YWCA Woc. Institute	SIHEA
70.	Mrs Marie Kamara	20 Greene Lane	Parent
71.	Mrs Adama Turay	12 Fisher Lane	Parent
72.	Mrs Elizabeth Hyde	K21 F.B, College	Panelist
73.	Mrs Eunice Randall	10, Wilberforce Valley	Parent
74.	Mrs Ayodale Coker	47 Percival Street	Parent
75.	Mrs Comba Sam	Nurses Training School	Parent
76.	Mrs Marie Sesay	50 Mountain Cut	Parent
77.	Mrs Joya Cole	Sec. Techn. School	SIHEA
78.	Mrs M.H. King	-	Parent
79.	Mrs Clara Browne	6, Prince Street	Guardian.

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

THE ADVANTAGES OF FAMILY PLANNING

Family Planning simply means that a husband and wife decide how many children they want to have and when. They talk about it and plan how big the family will be --taking into consideration where they live, how big a farm they have, and how much money they have to live on. They then go to a Family Planning Centre or health clinic to get more information and the help they need to avoid having too many children.

The practice of family planning is not new in traditional societies of developing countries. Traditionally, no woman became pregnant before her child in arms was able to walk and talk. The taboos against early resumption of sexual relationships between husband and wife following delivery and widely practiced polygamy contributed tremendously to this wholesome achievement. The practice of allowing an interval of 2 to 3 years between pregnancies has several advantages.

A. Advantages to the mother of spacing birth through family planning.

1. The mother has an opportunity to maintain her health, to regain the blood nutrients and energy lost during the 9 months of pregnancy and strenuous delivery. The fetus in the uterus gets the nutrients it needs for growth and development from the mother's blood through the umbilical cord. By the time the baby is ready to be born, the mother is carrying an extra weight of some 20-24 lbs. Which puts extra strain on her back and abdominal muscles, her heart, and breathing. The uterus becomes distended and needs time to become small again before it is stretched again by another pregnancy.
2. Where this interval is not achieved the uterus becomes stretched again too soon and many women exposed to this hazard are unable to push the baby during labour. Others can bleed to death after the baby is born because the uterus does not contract fast enough following expulsion of the placenta.
3. The mother has a greater chance to devote her attention and love to the baby in arms, her husband, and the older children.
4. She has time to take her child to the Child Health Clinic for regular check-ups and immunization against common childhood diseases. This protection reduces infant mortality which is a major cause for many closely spaced pregnancies as mothers try to replace the babies who die.
5. Women not tied down by continuous child-bearing have time and energy to devote to community affairs or to activities which increase the family's income.
6. Family planning protects the mother from undesired pregnancy which, when it occurs, leads many to seek illegal abortion. Abortion by unskilled persons is very dangerous and can have extremely serious consequences. The cervix - entrance to the womb -- can be damaged and the woman can bleed to death or she may not be able to carry another pregnancy to term because of the damage serious infection sometimes occur and women who recover become sterile for life and they may never recover good health gain. Some women also die when the infection cannot be treated.
7. Prolonged breastfeeding imparts some protection against cancer of the breast. On the other hand too frequent and closely spaced pregnancies predisposed women to cancer of the cervix. A happy balance has to be struck to reduce the incidence of these two diseases.

B. Advantages to the baby of family planning and good nutrition.

1. The baby continues to be breastfeeding for at least two years even if mother gets pregnant again.
2. Breast milk provides all the nutrients the baby needs to grow properly, contains antibodies that protect the baby in his early months from common childhood diseases. Breast milk is clean and tastes good to the baby; it is always at a suitable temperature. There are no cups, bottles, or spoons to be prepared before feeding starts.
3. Formula milk in bottles which is now widely used even in rural areas can expose babies to infection through contamination during preparation, and to malnutrition as many mothers cannot afford to follow the recommended composition of the preparations because they are very expensive.
4. The contact between mother and baby during breast-feeding contributes to the psychological and emotional development of the baby.
5. A baby, whose mother is in good health and is well-fed during pregnancy and lactation, develops his brain cells to maximum potential and if he is breast fed for 9 months or more, his physical and mental development is very much enhanced.

6. The nutrition of the fetus in the uterus and of the baby plays a role in determining the height weight, cleverness, resistance to illness, and capacity for mental and physical performances of the child as he grows.
7. In many traditional communities female children are fed less often and with less often and with less nutritious foods than male children. This practice hinders the physical development of the entire female body. Females with poorly developed reproductive organs and pelvises have many problems, during pregnancy and labour. If poor nutrition continues during pregnancy, their babies tend to be under-weight, too, and their chances of survival are reduced.

C. Advantages to the family

1. A father whose wife is in general good health because of well-spaced pregnancies tends to have healthy children and a happy home.
2. Parents can better meet their children's basic needs for clothing housing, bed space, school fees, and recreation if families are planned.
3. Men are not forced by circumstances to overwork themselves in order to obtain enough support for the family if they plan the family according to their ability to meet their needs.
4. The children are not constantly sick because they had adequate nutrition while in the uterus or as babies.
5. A healthy family tends to be a happy family.

D. Advantages to the nation

A nation whose population growth rate matches its resources and development is able to better meet the needs of its people. The government can provide adequate schools, health services, environmental sanitation, housing communications, job opportunities, and recreation or amusement facilities much more readily.

E. Family Planning as a decision-making process

1. Why do parents have children
 - . for security in old age
 - . feel they are necessary for complete and happy home
 - . life love of children
 - . parents want grandchildren
 - . need to be needed
 - . to perpetuate the species
 - . nature takes its courses
 - . to prove manhood/womenhood
 - . others.
2. Responsibilities and factors to be considered in family planning.

Considerations:

 - . health of mother (physical and mental)
 - . prenatal and child birth finances
 - . ability to provide adequate child care as parents
 - . educational responsibilities
 - . provision of food, clothing and shelter
 - . ability to meet the emotional needs of each child
 - . the number of children should be agreed upon between husband and wife.

3. Factors mitigating against acceptants of family planning

- a. high infant mortality
- b. religious view points
- c. social and political attitudes
- d. poverty
- e. family and community pressures
- f. fatalistic philosophy

PHYSIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION

The Male Reproductive System:

1. The testicles are in a sac of skin called scrotum, which is outside the body and hangs between the thighs. The testicles produce sperm, the male seeds of life, and the male sex hormones.
2. The vas deferens are the two tubes which carry the sperm.
3. The seminal vesicles secrete the white fluid in which the sperm are suspended.
4. The penis is the male organ inserted into the vagina during intercourse.
5. The sperm produced by the testicles are carried through the vas deferens into the pelvis to mix with the white fluid produced by the seminal vesicles and prostate gland. At orgasm they are discharged along the urethra to the opening at the tip of the erect penis into the vagina.

The Female Reproductive System:

1. The vagina is a canal to receive the penis, to discharge menstrual bleeding, and also a passage for the delivery of the baby.
2. The ovaries, one on each side, are storehouses for the eggs, which are released, usually one each month, from one or the other ovary.
3. The ovaries secrete two major female sex hormones.
4. The fallopian tubes, one on each side of the body, carry the ripe egg released by the ovaries to the uterus.
5. The fallopian tubes are also the place where the egg is fertilized by the sperm.
6. The uterus is a pear shaped organ where the fertilized egg implants itself to develop into a baby.

Conception

1. Pregnancy occurs when a sperm meets an egg.
2. A mature male discharge 2-4cc of semen during one ejaculation during intercourse.
3. Each cc of semen contain about 30 million sperm. Sperm, after being discharged, move through the vagina, then into the uterus and up the fallopian tubes.
4. Conception occurs when one of the sperm meets the egg which is released by the ovary. The fertilized egg, by the contraction of the tube, moves down the fallopian tube to the uterus to nest on the uterine lining. It then develops gradually to a baby.
5. The sperm will die in three days if they fail to meet an egg. The egg, if not fertilized by the sperm, will lose its conception ability after 12 hours and will disappear.
6. Ovulation occurs approximately on the 14th day before the onset of menstruation. Menstruation is a monthly bleeding of the uterine lining - a process by which the uterine wall prepares itself for the next cycle.

SUMMARY

A one day seminar for 100 school going youths (boys and girls) was held at the YWCA Vocational Institute Hall on the 16th February, 1980, 10.00 am to 5.00pm. Five pupils were invited from twenty secondary schools and participated with the approval of their principals:-

Annie Walsh Memorial School	Freetown Secondary for Girls
Rokel Secondary School	Juba Secondary School
S.L. Grammar School	Prince of Wales School
Ahmadiyya Secondary School	Methodist Girls High School
St Edwards Secondary School	Alberta Academy
Secondary Technical School	Roosevelt Secondary School
Collegists Secondary School	Y.W.C.A. Vocational Institute
St. Josephs Secondary School	Govt Model Secondary School
Bishop Johnson Sec. School	Kissy Municipal Secondary School

A Panel of five adults gave their views on the topic "The Adolescent in Today's Society" from the point of view of the Church, the School, The Society, the Parents and the Counselor. This was followed by a reactor panel of youths - three boys and three girls who spoke about youth problems from their own point of view. There was opportunity for general discussion between both adults and youths as well as group discussions on burning issues and concerns identified by the youths themselves.

Pearflets and brochures on adolescent fertility were distributed to each participant. An evaluation questionnaire was distributed and completed by the youths. Also a question box was located in the hall so that youths could ask questions that they were unable to ask openly. These questions are listed as part of this report.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Mrs Muriel Davies	- Youth Panel
Mrs Alberta Wright	- Adult Panel
Mrs Gladys Carrol	- Group Discussion
Mrs Selina Smith	- Group Discussion
Mrs Theresa Lawson	- Snack and Refreshments
Mrs Z. Wilson Taylor	- Snack & Refreshments
Mrs Doris Robers	- Question Box
Miss Q. Jarrett	- Evaluation
Mrs L. Adesini Davies	- Evaluation
Mrs M. Webber	- Registration
Mrs P. Greene	- Coordinator

SIERRA LEONE HOME ECONOMICS ASSOCIATION
 SEMINAR FOR YOUTHS
 RESPONSIBLE LIVING

FEBRUARY 16TH 1980 YWCA Vocational Institute

Evaluation Questionnaire

(DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME, GIVE HONEST, SHORT & SIMPLE ANSWERS)

1. Sex :- Male _____ Female _____
2. Religion :- Christian??? _____ Muslim _____
 Other (Please specify) _____
3. Age :- 12 yrs _____ 13yrs _____ 14yrs _____ 15 yrs _____
 16 yrs _____ 17yrs _____ 18yrs _____ 19yrs _____
 Below 12 yrs _____ Above 19yrs _____
4. Do you live :- By yourself? _____
 With Parents? _____
 With Gaurdians _____
 With Friends _____
 With relatives _____
 Other (please esqedity) _____
5. What are Three important problems or needs of adolescents today
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
6. DO YOU HAVE A PERSONAL PROBLEM, WORRY OR NEED FOR WHICH YOU WOULD WANT HELP AND ADVICE ? _____ YES _____ NO.
7. (a) If yes briefly state the problems, need or worry _____

 (b) Have you sought advice or counseling from anybody? Yes _____ No _____
 8a) If yes whom did you approach? _____
 9b)m Was the advice or counseling satisfactory yes _____ No _____
9. Have you heard of the Family-Welfare Education and Counseling Centre of the Sierra Leone Home Economics Association ? _____ Yes _____ No

10. Have you used this counseling service Yes _____ No _____
11. What do you feel about this centre ? -:
- Is it Necessary _____
- Is it Convenient _____
- Would Youths use it _____
- Other Comments _____
12. What is your attitude to sex education
- (a) taught in schools _____ yes _____ No _____
- (b) given by parents/guardians _____ Yes _____ No _____
- (c) Children should find out for themselves by
"experience and personal investigation" _____
Yes _____
13. If you had a younger brother or sister who is not yet an adolescent how would you like her/him to learn about the 'facts of life'.
14. Do you fully understand the sexual changes occurring in boys and girls during puberty ? _____ Yes _____ No _____
- b Do you need more information? _____ Yes _____ No _____
15. How did you learn about the changes that take place in your body during adolescence _____
16. Would you prefer your younger sister or brother to learn the same way
_____ yes _____
17. What is your feeling about drug-taking by youths _____
18. What are some of the reasons why young people take drugs ? _____
19. Can you recommend one-way in which this practice can be tackled _____
20. What is your general relationship with your -:
- | | | | | |
|------------------|-------|------------|------------|------------|
| Parents/guardian | _____ | Good _____ | Fair _____ | Poor _____ |
| Teacher | _____ | Good _____ | fair _____ | poor _____ |
| Girl Friends | _____ | Good _____ | fair _____ | poor _____ |
| Boy friends | _____ | Good _____ | Fair _____ | Poor _____ |
21. How would you assess your self _____
22. Do you go to the Cinema ? _____ Often; _____ Seldom _____ Not at all
23. What kinds of films do you most enjoy (Tick one)

Thriller /action/war _____
 Romance/Sentimental _____
 Family Films _____
 Detective/Crime _____
 Other (please specify) _____

24. Do you think the types of films shown today influence the behaviour of youths
 _____ yes; _____ No;

Why _____

25. Do you like School ? _____ Yes; _____ No

Why _____

26. Do you like going to Church/Mosque/Religious activities _____ Yes; _____ No

27. What do you think the following could do to help youths today

Religion _____

School _____

Youth Organization _____

The Government _____

Other Organizations (please specify) _____

28. Would you like to receive through your school/through your parents (please
 Indicate which materials and publications on Adolescence, Human Development
 and Youth matters? _____ yes _____ No

b) What specific kinds of publications would you prefer --:

29. What do you think should be the attitude of adults to youths of today so
 that there will be harmony, peace and understanding in the homes, school
 and society at large. Feel free to list down as many points as you have time
 to write, in this space:-

30. What would you like to say about this seminar in which you are participating:

RESULTS OF EVALUATION

Only 73 pupils turned in their questionnaire at the end of the seminar. There
 were 25 boys and 47 girls.

Religion --: Muslims + = 19%
 Christians * = 78%
 Hindi = 1 pupil
 Traditionalist = 2 pupils

Age -:

12 yrs + = 2 pupils
 13 yrs + = 1 "
 14 yrs + = 2 "
 15 yrs + = 2 "
 16 yrs + = 20 (27%)
 17 yrs + = (25%)
 18 yrs + = (14%)
 19 yrs + = (19%)
 20 + = 3

72% of the pupils lived with their parents, whilst 14% lived with gaurdians, 7% with relatives, 3% with friends and 3% live alone and only one pupila lived in a boarding home.

Parental love and care, shelter and clothing

Freedom at home and in the society to be more involved in social activities.

Finance

Lack of adequate security and counseling

Strong sexual instinct/urge

Drug addiction

Truancy

Heoliganism

Indiscipline

Poor relationship between parents and children

Immaturity

Boy/friend-girl-friend relationship

Non-chalant attitude to parents and society

Boredom

Menstruation problems

Pregnancy

45% of the pupils had some personal problems, worry or need for which they wanted help and advice.: 49% had none while 6% did not respond to the question.

Personal problems for which they needed help included the following -:

Poverty

Responsibility for self

Family problems in securing bððks, good education and money

Very little educational activities (extra curricular)

Unduly late men struation after seveteen years of age

irregular periods

Being temperamental

Poor facilities and oppportunity to demonstrate ingenuity

Discipline in the home - father very strict

Forced early marriage.

Poor family relationships

Lack of means to complete education

Boy friends not allowed to visit at home

Girl friend is pregnant

Does not have a serious steady boyfriend

Wants to understand the reproductive system.

42% had sought advice or counselling from someone; 26% had not. The rest did not respond to this question. Those who sought advice got help from parents, responsible adults in the family, school teacher and Principal) and the Civil Service. 90% of them were satisfied with the advice or counseling they received.

50% of the pupils had heard of the SLHEA Family Welfare and Counselling Centre, 45% had not heard of it and 5% did not respond. Of these who knew about the centre 20% had used service.

68% felt that the Centre was necessary; 20% that it was convenient and 25% said that youths would use the centre if they knew about it.

They were asked to give their attitude to sex education. 84% said it should be taught in schools; 45% said it should be given by parents or guardians; 28% said children should be allowed to find out about sex and their bodies development by experience and personal investigation.

Most of them indicated that they would like their younger sister or brother to learn about the facts of life from the school, parents and older people in the society. 85% stated that they fully understood the sexual changes occurring in girls and boys during puberty but 76% said they needed more information.

50% stated that they learnt about the changes that take place in the body during adolescence by experience and 50% through wide reading in school and from biology classes. 61% said that they would prefer their younger sister or brother to learn the same way they did.

All participants felt that drug taking was bad and injurious to health and mental state. They believed that people take drugs because of frustration depression, for pleasures - to make them brave and bold and keep them on the alert at studies; lack of recreation; to feel high; to forget problems, as a stimulant.

80% recommended counselling as one way to tackle the problem; 20% suggested banning of the manufacture, sale and importation of drugs.

They were asked to indicate their relationships with their parents guardians, teachers peers. 30% had good relationships with their parents and guardians; 33% had good relationships with their teachers; 33% had good relationships with their girl friends and 29% had good relationships with their boy friends. They seem to be getting along better with the same sex e.g. boys relationship with each other was better than of that with girls.

40% of the pupils went to the cinema often; 50% stated they seldom went to the cinema and 10% said not all. Of these who normally go to the cinema 25% enjoyed thriller action-war films; 25% enjoyed romantic and sentimental films; 36% enjoyed watching detective-crime films; and 8% liked watching religious films. A few of them enjoyed watching more than one type of film.

78% felt that the types of films shown today influence the behaviour of youths because youths accept the morals portrayed by the films and try to put them into practice; Others mentioned hero worship; copying the behaviour of films stars, some films arouse sexual feelings.

100% stated that they liked going to school because it is the centre of indoctrination and where knowledge is imparted and improved they meet with peers and they are prepared for their future.

89% said they liked going to Church or Mosque and religious activities. They felt religious could help youths in the following ways -:

- Sermons are interesting and worship is meaningful
- Teach youths to prepare for future life
- Religious activities should be increased such as youth fellowships
- Modern outlook to attract the youths
- Special prayers said for youths at services.

They felt the school should provide more facilities for education and the cost should be reduced. More extra-curricular activities should be provided. Counsellors should be attached to all schools; Provide education on the facts of life - sex education.

They felt that Youth organizations should extend their activities through the mass media and bridge the gap between youths and adults by providing entertainment for all; They should provide interesting topics for discussion and bring youths together to teach them good morals; Provide recreational facilities and special programmes for youths.

They suggested that the government should handle the country's development in a way that better amenities are provided for all youths; spend more money on education and provide more job opportunities. They suggested also that heavy punishment should be inflicted on 'sugar daddies' (older men who seduce teenage girls; There should be a law reform on the sale of alcohol - suggested minimum age 18 years. Youths should be involved in politics; more recreational activities provided for youths; stop the importation of drugs; organize youth forums.

They suggested that the Family Welfare and Counselling Centre, the PPA, Drama clubs and sports organizations should all help to advise youths and organize activities for them.

95% would like to receive publications on sex education-adolescence, human development and youth matters in particular. 10% would like these publications to go through their parents and schools.

They were asked to list some of the ways in which adults and youths could relate in harmony, peace and understanding in the home, school and to the home, school and society at large. They mentioned the following.

Adults should be pace setters from youths; they should show love sincerely and hospitality to youths; be patient and care for them as well as respect them as individuals; they should create an atmosphere for youths to be able to confide in them, guide youths and show concern for their welfare; not be indifferent; give maximum freedom to youths; provide enough for them; allow youths to be verbal and not restrain them in anything they wish to express; attitudes of parents should improve; parents

should find time for family togetherness at least one hour each day the whole family should be together and show interest and concern for each others.

The pupils were asked to state anything they wish in relation to the seminar itself. They indicated that the seminar was very interesting, and didactic and that they learnt a lot from it; they were able to share experiences with others and recognized that the problems were common. They had learnt a lot about problems of adolescence and how some of them can be solved. They thought the seminar was a milestone in the good relationship between adults and adolescence and they had the feeling that the SLHEA does not consider that youths are all evil in society. They hoped that SLHEA will continue to seek their interest and hold such meetings quarterly or annually so that other youths would have the same opportunity they had at the seminar.

QUESTIONS DROPPED IN QUESTION BOX

BY PUPILS DURING THE SEMINAR

1. Taking drugs smoking and overeating are all hazardous for health. The percentage of deaths by accidents is higher than that of those of who die by smoking. Why are some condemned and not others.
2. Why can't adolescents have a decisive mind of their own ?
What do parents mean when they say "don't speak when I 'am speaking" when the Adolescent has been augared by his parents?
3. Explain the changes occuring in boys and girls during puberty.
4. Why do some parents think their daughter is preganant when she reports that she is sick ?
5. Why do some parents not allow their children to go out with their friends ?
6. Why is the percentage of the population that takes drugs is still increasing ?
7. Why do parents feel shy to answer questions about love or sex brought up by their children?
8. Sex education is stressed upon; but nothing has be done concerning the introduction of it in our schools Please, this is an urgent concern.
9. Why is it that most parents leave their children is a care free suitation.
10. Why are adolescents not allowed to stay out late at night ?
11. Why is it that the parent nowadays do not have time to have any discussion with their children?

12. Why do parents not encourage their children to talk to them ?
13. Why do parents themselves not teach sex education to their children.
14. How could society help drop outs and delinquent children ?
15. Why do doctors in our country performs abortion as school girls.
16. Some parents do encourage their children in the habit of drug-taking or even in some cases they give their children contraceptives.
Why should it happen ? The blame is on the parents in this case.
17. Why do parents not allow their children to talk to them ?
18. Why do they not allow children to go out instead of always keeping them at home?
19. Do you think that sex education is necessary in school ?
20. What can you do to help us about sexual education of our parents are not particular about teaching us.
21. When children go out and come back late parents look them out. Dont they know it is makes it more dangerous ?
22. Why can't the trafficking of drugs be stopped ?
23. Why do people take drugs ?
24. Today parents neglect their children why is this so ?
25. Why are the youths always blamed by the elders and vice Versa, the youths always blame the elders ?
26. Is there a way by which students could be able to establish this counseling activity school ?
27. Why cant you hold a seminar in which certain youths are invited to talk about the "sugar daddy" - system in Sierra Leone ? Because they are encouraging girls for sex.
28. Since nature is something very difficult to control, is it good or advisable to have sex relations by using contraceptives for example "durex "during adolescence ?
29. Why is the relationship very poor in some homes? e.g. parents do not allow their children to have love affairs. Why dont parents check their children they go out at night ?
30. Why do parents not explain their problems to the children so that they could see their point of view for not providing for our base needs,
31. Dp you think reading Romance books and watching Romance films are something bad ?
32. Why shouldn't children became members of P.P.A. ?
33. Why shouldn't girls stay out till midnight
34. How should the sex be taboo subject between parents and child relationship ?
35. Why do some fathers fall in love with school girls and do not want their own daughter s to be in love with boyfriends ?
36. What does the church feel about polygamy in the home and how could this problem be solved.
37. Why dont some parents feel free to tell youths during the adolescence about the facts of life ?

38. Why should adolescents think that all will not go well when they enter sexual relationship ?
39. I usually menstruated for three or four days sometime I only menstruated for two days and I am worried about it .
40. What would you do for me if I went to you and told you to advise me about the pill I should use.
41. Do parents ever have something to do with the delinquency of a child ?
42. Why do parents not tell their children about sex ?
43. Why is it that parents do not show interest in problems of the youths but when the youths go astray they start to blame the teachers, friends and the society ?
44. Why is sexual intercourse not allowed between a boy and girl when in love.
45. Should parents allow their children to have absolute freedom ?
46. Why should parents restrict children from their wants.
47. When should one start to indulge in sexual intercourse ?
48. Why do parents always think when their children go out with the boy friends they do things out of the way ?

The School's Point of View - Mrs Lati Hyde Forster

Madam President, Members of the Association I must first of all thank you for inviting me to talk to the pupils. I congratulate you on this venture and hope the pupils. I congratulate you on this venture and hope the pupils will benefit from today's exercise. According to the theme for today's Seminar, one is reminded that societies existed long before and if adolescents are giving us food for thought, they posed problems and difficulties then also. The problems is therefore global and must be treated as such - a problem is a problem - but some problems can be handled with ease or with great difficulty depending on (a) the size of the Community (b) the standard of the development of the Society and (c) the attitude and outlook of that society.

All these points affect the adolescent for good or evil.

Not long ago, I read that some modern Explorers travelling through the dense forests of South America came suddenly upon a small Community of less than 60 people. They were happy peaceful, with no obvious problems from the old, the adolescent of the very young Polygamy was unknown - it was one man one wife without exceptions. The Community or society was so small that there was plenty of room for every one or small group to move around without bumping into each other or other similar groups. The amenities of life were few and simple - reduced to bare necessities. Therefore not the usual strain from the complexities of life. Stages in development ran smoothly from one to the other because in such a society, all the learning or education needed was provided in the simple home which formed a part of the few other homes that made up their society. Further more, there were no neighbours with a different cultures to compete with them or upset their pattern of life - in short there was no clash of cultures. But as soon as many more people live together and within easy reach of neighbours, all kinds of problems arise.

Let us consider others not so simple and their treatment of the adolescent life. What is the meaning of adolescent? It is the period in one's life between Childhood and adult stage - between boyhood and manhood, between girlhood and womanhood. This is a very crucial stage and the change from one to the other may be fairly easy for some and very turbulent for others. Generally the change begins about the age of 12 for girls and 14 for boys and goes on to the 18th year for the girls and 25th year for boys. These very people may have had to adjust themselves to their growth and development from babyhood to childhood and now find that they have to go on whether they like it or not. Sometimes, some feel they are not able to cope and either give up, or try and fail, or resent the whole situation. Personal problems therefore appear first. Each individual, in this period of change has to cope with biological, and mental growth, while he also adjusts himself to the society in which he lives, and at the same time, struggles to keep his identity.

A society cannot make separate laws for as many individuals in its group, and the fact that there are girls and boys who enter and leave the adolescent stage at different times, it follows that one person will either have to manage his affairs correctly based on the laid down and accepted principles or face the consequences.

This is indeed a crucial stage some children prefer to remain longer in childhood but because of the sophisticated stage of the community, discover to their chagrin that they must press on - so a group of unwilling horses is produced.

Different tribes or communities handle the situation in different ways.

In ancient times Athens was a highly civilised state surrounded by others states of similar standard. Each was powerful and each was determined to keep its identity and not be either swamped or defeated by one or other sister states. It was a race of survival. The State decided to take complete charge of the education of the adolescent boys away from the Homes and from the age of eight years and throughout the adolescent period, the children left home they could be visited by their parents, but father and mother were relieved of the responsibility of the training of their sons completely. The state must survive so the young people must submit self for the welfare of the state, community of society. Instead of an educational system in which, home and school work together for the welfare of the children, in this case the home is ignored, and parents are not consulted. Such a utopian type of state, where each group is allocated its special tasks and each adheres to the laws, resulting in the smooth running of its affairs, can only succeed because there is no easy flow of ideas between states and movement from one state to another is restricted. That state cannot be compared

to what we know today in a highly industrial country or even in one of the third world communities.

We are considering especially the adolescent in a community but particularly those who attend school. A large proportion of these would also have had the experience of learning and working with their companions in nursery schools, where through play they would have acquired some basic knowledge of the educational system peculiar to the society. More important still, this group of adolescents would have had the unique advantage of learning to live and work with others of different ages and from different homes and background. They would also have been introduced to the ideas of sharing, the adjustment of self or individuality, to fit in with a group, while at the same time they strive to remain as individuals in their own right.

Success or failure in the social life of an adolescent in school is a thing that is so obvious, something that cannot be covered up. Shyness is one handicap that would either have been completely cured or controlled by the time the adolescent enters school if he has had the opportunity of pre-school experience.

I must confine myself to the adolescent as we see them in school. Broadly, school is a place where adolescents find themselves for five or seven years, but the programmes vary according to countries and development. When we speak of development, we generally mean the development as displayed by what is known as the developed countries. The idea is taken up by developing countries and the pattern adjusted to fit in with their culture, aims and aspirations of each country.

Different methods of schooling have been tried and been in existence in African countries long before where the main idea of educating the adolescent was purely for the purpose of the survival of the State it therefore mean the complete sublimation of self for the success of the state. In semi-primitive societies, the training is harsh and if an adolescent died in the exercise he would have done his duty. In some of these cases it appeared that the idea behind the early part of the exercise, was an attempt to weed out the weak so that when the most important stage of the training came, they would not be handicapped by those who are unable to cope. There was no place for the less able to in the educational system. You either are fit to make it or the system saw to it that you did not in any way affect the programme adversely.

What is the idea of schools in our society? It is a place set aside for young people to learn - to obtain instruction relevant to the course they intend to follow in the career they have chosen or will choose to enter later on. Schools are of different kinds. There is the one-sex school; a school of either completely boys or girls ranging from one to 900 in some cases. Some of these are either completely boarding or partly boarding schools - (3) There are others that cater for both sexes and are day schools. Among the single sex or mixed schools there is a very small percentage that run the afternoon shift.

Today many mothers are working, and cannot find the time to go as often to the schools which their children attend as they would like or the school authorities wish, so the communication system between home and school is very weak indeed. What is the result on the child? Some trade on this, especially in their first and second years. Take the case of a child who attended a primary school where according to the marks set down in their cards she did well before entry into a secondary school. She is now one of many boys or girls from different other schools, competition begins. The child discovers that as many other girls from other schools can do as well - and even better. That is the first shock. This may not create any difficulty if the parent accepted the fact that there were other who could do better academically than their children. The child is scolded for falling below her standard-with the result that children sometimes resort to disgraceful cheating to please their parents - and the child is put under great strain as he tries to cover up his crime. And such a crime must go on for sometime until it is detected and the poor child is branded as dishonest. Matters are worse when both parents and school teachers fail to see the point and correct and guide the child accordingly.

Do we really know what is in the minds of the child when he first comes to school. Either because from prodding from their parents or because they know someone they admire, they choose a career they are unfit for. e.g. - a boy may have made up his mind to become a doctor when he cannot cope with the science subjects. When he discovers his inability he may be prepared to change but because his parents had dreams of the doctor son they refuse to let him change his subjects, the result is that his performance deteriorates - he loses self confidence - he develops the feeling of guilt because he has failed - an inferiority complex. At the same time, those who are doing well become his enemies. He does not find it now so easy to fit in with the Society.

Things have improved and will continue where consideration is being given to provide a curriculum that would cater for all talents, aptitudes and interests. For one area which causes great concern to a child is the fact that he cannot cope with his work in school. This may be due to the fact that the syllabus does cater for the areas or subjects in which he can perform well and he is obliged to study subjects he finds difficult to handle or sees no relevance to them and what he himself eventually wants do.

What is the real aim of a child on entry into school? It is to prove his mettle. To show to the rest of the school what he can do - to prove that he can make it. He would obtain a good place for himself - make a name for himself in the School and later in the country. To many it is collecting, storing facts in the head or keeping of copious notes for future reference.

School is a miniature of the society in which it is set up and so it must arrange its programme in such a way that it is a real part of it and ensure that dialogue between it and the Community is real. Where this is lacking, the discipline in the school will be weak. You see, unless this dialogue is maintained the child will find himself living in two completely different worlds with no means of communication and he will daily have to adjust himself to the idea of being one person in the morning and another when he leaves the school premises.

One boy may do it beautifully and enjoy it. Another boy may not be able to cope and will become a problem to himself, to the school and the home at the same time.

After the early stage of the basic education the school should direct children to the area they think a child would perform well and direct him there in consultation with the child, the teachers who teach him, and his parents.

The teacher must be fair to all and what is sauce for the goose must be sauce for the garden. All pupils must be treated as equals but the handling of each individual pupil will vary only on the needs of each. In preparing and giving his lessons special attention must be given to the range of the age group in forms particularly in the first three forms when children are growing rapidly and at the same time adjusting themselves to the new society.

Why so much drug taking in the present society ?

1. When a child feels he has failed or on the verge of failure, he feels a grad and resorts to this to avoid reality.
2. With no special direction from the school because teachers for many reasons are not aware of their problems and they do not get the help they require.
3. The parents through ignorance, ignore their children and supply them only with material goods and when they cannot at any time meet with their demands, the situation results in violence.
4. Definite religious instruction must be given in school not only as formal lesson but by talks to groups and individuals.
5. Some ways and means must be found to encourage pupils to bring their difficulties to one or more members of staff who in turn must never fail in the confidence reports to them.

The Adolescent in Today's Society

The Parents point of view by Sylvia M. Savage

Introduction:

I should first of all express appreciation to the President and members of the Sierra

Leone Home Economics Association for inviting me to give the parents point of view in the panel discussion on the subject "The adolescent in Today's Society."

After I had accepted the invitation, and found out the other members of the panel, I recalled a cartoon that I saw sometime ago. It went like this:-

A customer went to a restaurant for breakfast one morning and ordered two eggs.

"How would you like them " ? The waiter asked.

"One boiled, one fried" came the answer.

After the customer had enter, the waiter, satisfied that he had done a good job, went up to him and asked.

" Did you enjoy your breakfast ? "

" No "the customer answered abruptly.

"Why ?" the disappointed waiter asked.

"Because, you fried the wrong egg".

Perhaps after my contribution to this discussion the members of the Flanning Committee would say, "We choose the wrong speaker".

I wondered what my credentials are to present the parents point of view. However the assignment, if nothing else, has given me an opportunity to understand better some of the behaviour of adolescents, which before, as a parent, I considered.

Characteristics of Adolescents

What is this individual like that we are here to discuss ? I would describe him as difficult, awkward and hard to get along with; but mind you, this has happened through no fault of his, for God has made him so. He is longer wants to be a child but he is not developed enough to be called an adult. In short, he is not fully developed; he is confused and is going through a period of strain and stress. During this period from about 12 to 19 years of age, he struggles on and, because he is confused, we as parents, teachers, religious and social teachers are confused also. The people who reature prominently in his life have a duty. That duty is to understand his point of view of the world and try to bridge the gap between his world and the world of the adult.

We must understand, in the first instance, that the problem with adolescents is not inique to our society or to our culture. It cuts across all cultural barriers.

But difference in life style and affluence in any society would influence the demands on the rights and privileges which the adolescents make on parents.

For many of us, parents in particular, child during the adolescence period is considered troublesome and hard to get along with. We know what we want through with our parents, bless them. They went all out to cater for our physical needs, educational and moral needs, social needs to some extent; but also, ~~our~~ psychological needs, were for the most part not considered. But that kind of upbringing seemed good for us. Parents seemed good for us. Parents seemed to us for from being understanding. But then they did not realise they were doing the wrong thing. As far as they were concerned, they were bringing us up the best way possible. With modern trends in education things are now completely different. Some of us parents are exposed to modern ways of child rearing. The method which gives the child some amount of liberty. But are we better than our mothers? Frankly, No! Many of these things we learned at college in Child Psychology, Adolescent Psychology and related courses; but when it comes to practising them on our children, it is quite a different matter.

The Home Economics Association should be commended for organising this seminar. Here we will receive practical education and hear the views of people connected with the whole child. I am particularly pleased with the presence of the Counsellor, a relatively new and needed person in our society. With her guidance and counselling, parents, hopefully will go home as more understanding persons.

Adolescent-Parent Relationship

What sort of a relationship does the adolescent have with his parents- ?

Even in his early teens, the adolescent continues to be a child, who is highly dependent on his parents. Still clings on like mama's little boy and is greatly influenced by them. After that, the struggle begins. He wants to be free. He wants to be an adult and wants to instantly. He wants to shake off the dependency and assume responsibilities for himself and the way he goes about it is not usually pleasant. This period is rough. A period of anxiety not only for the adolescent but also for the parents themselves.

What are some examples of events which cause the constant conflicts during this period in a child's life?.

Normal parents cannot help but be anxious about their children. They worry about their safety, their progress in school, their future, about their girls going astray. All sorts of things that you can imagine, they worry about. But to today's adolescents, this worrying is a source of annoyance. In their struggle for independence, they resent their parents's concern for them and parents in turn get the feeling of being rejected. A situation of this nature should be viewed dispassionately and parents should understand that what may seem like rejection is part of the struggle.

The child at this stage has no heart. He is cruel; but according to psychologists this is a sign of healthy growth. This may seem too much for parents to accept because they have given up their time and are devoted to their children. In return they are having what seems to be an unfair deal.

Sometimes, parents themselves get confused as to what to do to please the adolescent and at the same time conform to Society's expectations. They are told not to control the lives of their teenagers, but at the same time they are expected to stop them from staying out late or mixing with the opposite sex at an early age. They are told not to make auster sacrifices for their children but yet they should protect them from molestation by their peers. What must parents of adolescent do then? Sometimes I wonder:

The adolescent sees everything but good in his parents. His parents do not know anything, are old-fashioned, do not conform to modern trends, are cruel. Your name it and many parents would be guilty according to adolescent's standards. In return for all this the adolescent becomes defiant and refused to conform to the wishes of his family. I am saying this from experience with my own children. Sometimes in my family, the situation gets to the point when I wonder who is in sane, me or my children.

I had an experience with one of mine which I would like to share. My seventeen year old son for one reason or the other wanted a record player. For one reason or another we decided not to give him one. He became defiant and unco-operative and even though he had been warned several times, he continued to use the family set. His father quietly dismantled the set, but my son got the parts from outside and used the set while we were out. He was caught and we demanded an explanation. "Well", he said "other boys either have sets of their own or are allowed to use the family set but you wouldn't let me use this one", His father explained why he could not have one then and why the privilege of using the set was withheld. He further told him that he was disappointed at his constantly during his authority and trying to justify his behaviour. "Well" he said, "You are lucky that's all I have done. Some other boys would have sold the family set. When you consider it, I am not that bad after all". At that point my husband looked at me and we left the company before we got into trouble,

To us parents, this may seem out of place, but to the modern youth it was in place for him to air his views. Modern Psychologists call that healthy growth. Who are we to call it unhealthy?

What do you think of a boy who took a very quick bath. His mother, whom he considered nagging, warning him that if he did not wash properly he would smell in class. "Don't worry" he said to his mother. "They won't know where the odour is coming from. We all smell".

Here we go again, always some justification for the adolescent's action. What would a mother do for that smart retort, kill him? But rather an understanding mother would not lose patience even though the situation may be trying. She would explain, instruct and try to make the child see reason.

Towards a Better Relationship

What are some of the methods used by parents to prevent the adolescents from being what they tend to be? Some parents prevent them from going out with peer groups for fear of mixing with the wrong people. What happens is that they are pestered and called all sorts of names "Hos Pokin" Dead, Square, etc".

Other parents buy their children expensive clothes and gifts and make them have their way in almost everything. What happens? We all know, because we have seen quite a few of those in our Society.

Some, on the other hand, plead with them for sympathy and give all sorts of excuses to make them stay home with them.

These are fine, but will by no means shorten the period of adolescence and the strain and stress which go with it. There are ways in which some of the problems can be minimised. Parents must learn to be slow in losing patience with their adolescents. They must never get tired of explaining, instructing and answering their many questions. Give them the encouragement needed to meet each day's challenges and frustrations. Look for opportunities to express praise; glow a candle on their vices and shine a spotlight on their virtues. Support them, and above all be a close friend to them and strive to help them achieve the right type of independence which is the cause of struggle during the adolescence years. The mother who does not want her child to answer when she scolds is the old type. The modern parent will allow his child to express his feelings when he is hurt. It's not a bad thing, psychologists call it healthy growth.

Conclusion

The adolescence stage in one's life is the longest in human development. It is also very turbulent; but after it, comes a stage of satisfaction to the child as well as to the parents. A new creature emerges with only traits of the awkward, defiant, intolerable, rash individual that we have been discussing. It is really exciting to parents to watch children go through these stages of life. It is also rewarding, for after the strife the storm in life comes the calm. If parents spend the time and exercise the patience that is needed during those turbulent years the adolescent in today's Society will turn out to be a well adjusted productive adult one who will make useful contributions in tomorrow's world.

SUMMARY OF THE TALK TO THE YOUTHS

by The

Rev. Leslie Shyllon

The Rev Leslie Shyllon was happy that he had the chance to talk to the youths because he is a young adult with children and he works with youths in his Church.

He observed that today's youths make a typical statement in all situations and that statement is "We nor go take am" meaning "I will not accept this situation...". Parents advise their children and try to discipline them so that they will be able to live in the world and in all situation. When the children meet their friends and relate what parents have said, some of them friends say to them "You day take am?" "We nor go take am", meaning "Are you going to take the advise? I won't! "

Children who are not strong enough to withstand temptation listen to these friends and sometimes get into trouble.

Rev. Shyllon disclosed that he did not come from a rich family neither did he grow up in a posh area but he, like youths of the past, was willing to "take am", to accept his situation in life and be determined to improve it. He showed the Bible to the participants and impressed on them that it is a very useful possession in everyone's life. He quoted the passage of the Good Samaritan and gave an incidence in his life to illustrate this parable. A man's car would not start and several people passed by but offered no help. He, Rev Shyllon, came by and offered to help and to push the car. Some youths nearby noticed him and offered to help. He explained that the youths can be "Good Samaritans" with the right example and encouragement.

He hoped that young people of today would respect the wisdom of the Adults and with the help of the Bible improve the communication gap between the two groups thereby contributing to the development of the country.

oooooooooooooooooooo

The Adolescents in Today's Society (The World)

by Mr. S.A.S. Adams

Principal, Milton Margai Teachers College.

The Dreaming Stage of Life

Who is an adolescent? A young person too old to be called a child and too young to be called a Man or Woman - age 12 to 18 or 21? The old 21 year to be of mature age and ripe for manhood is now debated. 18 is the age for call up: People marry at the age of 16 with or without permission. 18 is the age for beginning to exercise the individuals's voting rights. This period is most probably the most difficult for the developing personality in all the stages of development of Man. Four main characteristics of this period are: Physical development, Acceptance of ideals of life, Maturing of the emotional life generally, the Maturing of intelligence. A very important stage. Because of the tremendous change in physical and mental make-up, exactly what is happening had to be explained to the adolescent. He should be provided with the tools for growth - playing active games - to help achieve co-ordination and overcome physical difficulties. Should be given opportunities to take up Craft-work and hobbies. In early adolescence 12 - 14, the sex organs and bodily characteristics develop leading to maturity. Due to this and to the sex instinct Characteristics development leading to Maturity, Due to this and to the sex instinct making its urge felt strongly, this period of Adolescent is spoken of as a period of stress and strain. It all depends on the attitude the child and adopt early on and with the wise and sympathetic guidance from Parents, Teachers and others in the Society.

What is Society and how is it made up? A national community composed of individuals. Society in which individuals belong - man-Woman and Child. Every one has an impact on the other in such a situation.

The Child: The need for security and adventure

As he grows increasingly, he has to face a world which in many ways he feels to be hostile - from the security of the womb to the great confusion and uncertainty of his immediate environment - hence he cried.

When he realises the affection of his parents he is able to meet his fears and they do not dominate his life. Affection is important not only during the early years of his life but through childhood and adolescence. These give him the foundation on which he can build the firm ground from which he can launch out. Affection and love do not mean pampering and cuddling. They mean standing behind the child, encouraging him to face his difficulties which are too much for him, and above all, giving him confidence to try out his powers, secure in the knowledge that what he is doing is understood and appreciated. The need for adventure, the need to gain experience. Security is the prerequisite for this need. The child has to be given opportunity to try himself out against his environment, to

exercise his powers, to make experiment - - adjust himself to the world. He must be given freedom. True development will never come unless the child has freedom to act and think for himself and to come to his own decisions. The child, if his personal personality is to grow in the real sense, must be encouraged to exercise that freedom of choice which God has given him. Only so will character develop.

Freedom must be graded. Complete Freedom of Choice cannot come until the child has become an adult and has learnt to make his decisions in relation to his fellow- and their welfare.

When the child is small, authority will have to be used. Gradually, more and more freedom should be given, always with due regard for the stage of growth, the environment and the strength of the developing personality. A gradually decreasing use of authority and a gradual increase of freedom are essential for the true development of the personality.

This is the awakening period when ideals begin to appear and to have a powerful effect on the personality especially in connexion with the Organisation of the self and the building up of sentiments. Hence, good examples are a must - examples of greatness, examples of worth. Copy cats.

As the period advances, the person chooses the ideal that will finally direct the organised self or will. So as boys and girls grow up, it is essential that high and noble ideals be placed before them and that they be encouraged to choose as the directing ideal of life, that which will enable them to live to the fullest. Action in accordance with the ideal must be encouraged in every way.

The influence of books is great during this period. The desire for reading is very powerful during this period and must be encouraged - therein to find characters who have influenced mankind for good over the ages. Suitable literature, especially in the mother tongue, must be provided to satisfy this insatiable need. Care should be taken to help adolescents to develop a sense of responsibility and power of leadership - in small doses, in school and home and else where (Churches etc.) Adolescence is the time for this work.

The signs of irresponsibility, the definite shrinking from assuming responsibility which are so common these days, are a result of a neglect of definite Training. Nothing seems to be done in this matter in many areas. What about the Youth Clubs; how far do they permeate the society? There are apparently many societies around but the gross irresponsibility so fatefully striking one in the face do not give credence to the efficacy of these clubs and societies.

It is foolish to deny the naturalness of the sex instinct, and to do so will not help us aiding young people to sublimate and control it. It is one of the fundamental developments of adolescence and this we must recognise. One of the most important

measures that we can take is to encourage our young adults to try themselves out with all sorts of creative work.

The period which sees their rise of the sex instinct is also characterised by the making of important friendships, a tendency to hero worship, an intense loyalty to the School, or College or other group with which the individual is associated and a sympathy with those who are less fortunate in human society; in short by the appearance of new or intensified social emotions other than those of sex. The Adolescent is a being who is beginning to understand his powers. He is beginning to understand his relation to the world around him and especially to his social environment. He is beginning to understand that there are political, and social and economic problems which though international in scope yet affect him. In short, he is growing up and beginning to feel himself a man. It is therefore well for adults to treat him as a man as far as possible.

Adolescence is living through a period of transition, He is neither a child nor an adult. Sometimes, he acts as one and sometimes as the other. Sometimes he wishes to be treated as one and sometimes as the other. This is what makes it so difficult to understand him. The adolescent, of course, is quite unaware of why he does what he is doing. He is swayed by two desires, on the one hand, to be independent and to have a chance for adventure, and on the other hand to be secure. That is needed to handle him successfully. Love, security, friendship must not be denied him. The adolescent may and does have the desire of security for he bitterly resents over- lordship and autocratic authority. He resents any attempt to prevent him from doing new and interesting things. He is uncertain of himself, yet rebellious against adult domination. We adults must never treat adolescents as inferior to ourselves; that is fatal. We shall never have any real influence with them if we do this. Sympathy and consideration are needed in the fullest measure in dealing with adolescents. He is critical of his own behaviour, judging it in the light of what other people will think of him. He is therefore self-conscious, liable to be easily embarrassed by ignorance of what to do in certain situations. He is afraid of making mistakes, and is peculiarly sensitive to ridicule. He begins to be critical of others, and yet is not sure that he has the right answers himself, no matter how sure he may be that the adult is wrong. This leads to moodiness.

Spens Report

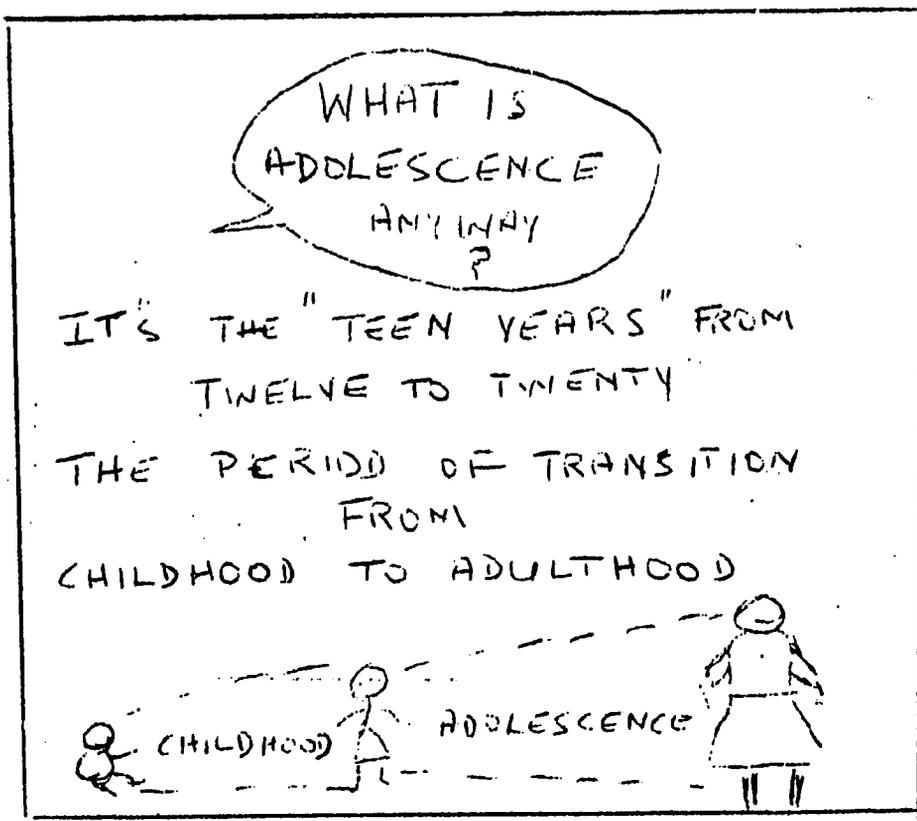
"The interest of Society (the State) is to see that the schools provide the means by which the nation's life may be maintained in its integrity from generation to generation; to make sure that the young are prepared to preserve - and some of them to advance - its standards in all modes of activity which are important to the common weal.....lll..... underneath this's xplicit, over educational activity of the State, working through laws and regulations, there is the unformulated but very demand of the community that the young shall grow up in conformity with the National ethos."

Usefull Notes

"All any grown-up expects of an adolsecent is that he act like an adult and be satisfied to be treated like a child".

"Adolescence is a time of rapid changes. Between the ages of 12 and 17, for example, a parent ages as much as 20 years."

"Infancy and adolsecence are perhaps the two most important periods of life; in different ways, they are both times of weaning; the first physical; the second Spiritual."



"The Adolescent in Today's Society"

A Counsellor's Viewpoint by Tunde Benka-Coker

Adolescence is that period in each individual's life which begins at the age of 14 years and closes at 21 years. Some boys and girls begin adolescence considerably early before they reach the age of thirteen and others do not finish the adolescent phase of their development by the time they reach manhood. The exact length of the adolescent period varies from individual to individual and from culture to culture. Adolescence is a period of transition. In some tribal societies in Sierra Leone and other parts of Africa, children are transformed into adults over night and are given adult responsibilities at the age of thirteen or fourteen years - and are quickly weaned from the family. It is a time when the individual is striving to wean himself from the family and become a self-sufficient independent person. The adolescent, in reality, is a developing adult. He is treated in an ambiguous manner by his parents, teachers and other members in the society. One moment he is told by his parents that he is too young to stay out late, drive a car, or take part in family decisions and discussions, and the next moment he may be told he is too old to be carrying on childish antics. Due to their ambiguous and frequently changing physique, they are often placed in a marginal situation with the physiological, sociological and psychological behaviour determiners of both childhood and adolescence acting upon them simultaneously.

The adolescent is fraught with anxiety and difficulties in which he is trying to move to an acceptable standard of behaviour and acceptance of himself. How well he attains this development depends on how well the society and adults assist him towards this period of growth and to overcome these dilemmas which he is experiencing.

The teenager sees himself as being temporarily out of control with a notion of potency without power. It is at this period that delinquency rates have been known to occur, suicides or attempted suicides become increasingly prevalent and drug and alcohol addictions, acts of violence, delinquency, immoral behaviour and vandalism may have their roots, resulting in the existence of general unhappiness for many.

It is for this reason that I consider this Seminar important and timely as there is a marked increase in children of school going age in Sierra Leone who do not only drink alcoholic beverages but some of them even mix drugs with

alcohol and become aggressive.

Some of them eventually become drop outs and delinquents and they express dissatisfaction with the society. This situation is gaining momentum so much so that a judge of the Supreme Court and an ex Speaker of the House of Representatives condemned the use of drugs and the smoking of "diamba" (marijuana) by school children in his speech at the 130th Speech Day and Prize Giving Celebrations of the Sierra Leone Grammar School. The Principal, Mr. Victor Hastings-Spaine said, "the root cause of indiscipline was deliberate refusal of pupils to find time to work and to be occupied purposefully". "Pupils who use drugs, smoke diamba (marijuana), gambled or attended school irregularly would be expelled", Mr. Hastings-Spaine warned.

Principals of Schools and parents are becoming very concerned about the problems and teachers should be alerted to these problems even though there might be a feeling of being rather helpless against this alarming new pattern of behaviour. Educationists and counsellors should be examining the normal needs of the adolescents as well as the apparent need of some of them for drugs, and we must act quickly. We cannot afford to sit back for years hoping for research results which may not give us the answers we are seeking. What is needed now is a series of well-informed, practical ideas for action followed by an examination of the size of the various problems, the nature and effect of the various drugs taken, the type of personality prone to drug abuse and to ask ourselves why these young people have resorted to them.

In the larger society, the adolescent is confronted by intensified pressures, values and standards which are not as clear cut and obvious as years gone by. They now have greater freedom, emancipation and wider academic and vocational opportunities, also great social and international problems in a society which is constantly changing and needs a mature person to be able to cope with it.

The adolescent's emotions, attitudes and behaviours are in a radical state of reshaping. Everything and everyone is closely scrutinized and criticized and opposed in their bid for independence - parents especially, however, they still need at this time more than others the stability which other adults can give. Teachers will be appraised more than ever and their contact with them plays an important role in the way they choose to structure or not structure their lives. Adolescents want to feel that they belong to a particular section or unit which is a part or within the larger society, and that he is valued, and can make a valuable and vital contribution, and also that meaningful personal relationships can be established not only with his peers but with the adults who know him as a whole person.

Our adolescents must be educated, every day social learning situations must be employed to help motivate them to behave with consideration and to realize that education is about caring for others, Making decisions for change adjustment, enthusiasm for life and creation.

Education should equip our adolescents to meet the demands of life, it must provide for more than the chance of a ticket to a university college or job, it must make it possible for him to make the maximum use of his personal resources and resilience. It must enable him to assess the pros and cons and decide on the various social issues with which he will be confronted later in life. Therefore, adolescents must be allowed to gradually develop their self awareness over a period of time. He needs to know his own assets, strengths, aptitude, ability, temperament, those qualities which he needs to modify and the strengths which he has to develop. He needs to know decision-making techniques, and requires assistance in practicing such techniques thereby gaining confidence in making decisions for himself. Emphasis should be placed on a realistic self-appraisal, rational planning, preparation for alternatives, problem solving of one's concerns, better human relationship and processing and re-processing the movement toward goals of responsible living at a time when the young needs beliefs and values to hold on to, and a firm emotional and rational base.

What can be done about the adolescents in our society and their problems?

If society cannot be made perfect, it must be made aware of their needs, problems and desires. Mass media should be encouraged to use their influence responsibly, local broadcasting would also be used to help create interest in local activities and so stimulate the adolescents to actively participate. Personal tutors, teachers, teacher counsellors in schools and colleges, and the church who will be able to give advice, be ready to sit and listen to them and handle the task as a preparation for life should be trained and involved. There is also need for counsellors who could be consulted informally and confidentially. The home, the school, the church and society must work hand in hand, each reinforcing the other to eradicate the social problems so that adolescents can be helped to make a successful transition to adult status.

Our adolescents need help and advice and the school, social services, church, family doctor and the family welfare and counselling service ought to be made more use of. There should be more talks with people who deal with their generation - special people who talk to young people. It is necessary to make the first contact with these adolescents because they all need help but will not make the first move towards a solution. More centres like the Family Welfare and Counselling

Service or Adolescents' Advice Service should be set up in various parts of the community where young people can just walk in without appointment whenever they feel like talking to someone and be able to discuss their problems confidentially. Such a service must be flexible, ready to adapt to the adolescents' needs. Once a month in school, a time could be set aside as problem time, when the pupils can have a chat with someone like a counsellor or within the school there should be a system where all pupils visit a teacher-counsellor or counsellor who is easy to talk to, discuss any problems with him, two or three times a year. It is essential that these people remain strangers to the pupils and are not likely to discuss the pupils' problems with their parents without first getting their consent.

Few children confide in their parents or even ask for their help and advice regarding their difficulties as they feel parents are too busy with their own affairs, or they may consider their problems too trivial to give them the necessary understanding and support which they require. Parents should therefore get closer to their children and communicate more with them. They should be more loving towards their children so that they could turn to them for help. They should be ready to listen to their children, encourage them, take their problems more seriously and give more advice.

The setting up of a Youth Counselling group which would provide continuing help and support for adolescents who are emotionally disturbed or who have been having medical treatment and are of average and above average intelligence has been of great service to youths in Britain and some other parts of the world. The group would set up weekly meetings with these adolescents where they would receive ongoing support and help with their various emotional problems from co-therapists - a male and female counsellor who would create a supportive, accepting, consistent and emotionally containing atmosphere - one of safety to enable the group to function successfully, thereby giving the individuals in the group, and the group, an opportunity to work at the problems which they consider important. The routine could be something like this. The meeting starts with making and consuming a hot or soft beverage, after that members can bring up their own personal problems or discuss a topic of common interest for about an hour.

The counsellor's duty would be to relate the various themes e.g. violence to the experience of the individuals in the group - and at times an opportunity will arise for the group to focus their attention on relationships within the group. Confidentiality of matters discussed is of utmost importance. The discussion is followed by a thirty minute period of competitive games enable the members to channel some of their emotional tensions which have not been 'talked through' in the first part of the session. It also gives the group an opportunity to break into small units allowing members to informally talk together with or without the counsellors thereby affording them an opportunity to grow emotionally within a caring and containing atmosphere.

Do not keep your problems bottled up. Find someone you can trust, confide in, relate to and discuss your problems with him or her, if you start dealing with the problem earlier, you are better able to minimize frustration and possible breakdown. You will have a better insight into your difficulties and problems if someone who is interested in you has been able to look at both sides of the problems with you, giving you the necessary help in solving it.

References:

Ayal, Haviva & Rivka Bekerman. 'Peer Counselling - A Means of Actualising Adolescents Helping Potential'. British Journal of Guidance & Counselling Vol. 6. No.2 July 1978.

Blair, Glenn Myers, R, Stewart Jones and Ray H. Simpson
Educational Psychology (2nd Edition) New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965.

Clegg, A.G. & P.C. Clegg. Man against Disease. London : Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1973.

"Dateline Africa" "West Africa, No.3016, London, WC 1V6HZ:
West Africa Publishing Company Ltd., Cromwell House,
Fulwood Place, April 14, 1975.

Schatdt, Elizabeth and Brian Truckee. 'A Counselling Group of Adolescents'
British Journal of Guidance and Counselling,
Vol. 5 No. 2, July 1977.

A Teacher's Journal on Social Problem. Monitor Salford 3 :
John Rovers & Sons, 172 Chapel Str., Vol.35. February 1972.

PARTICIPANTS

NAME	SCHOOL
1. Solomon Kamara	Albert Academy
2. Berye Metzger	A.W.M.S.
3. Alpha Shaw	Ahamadiya
4. Samuel Pratt	Sierra Leone Grammar School
5. Juliana Musa	Y.W.C.A.
6. Henretta Samuel	Y.W.C.A
7. Margaret Lebbie	Rokel Secondary School
8. Hulaimatu Jalloh	Rokel Secondary School
9. Olivia Diallo	Alberta Academy
10. Eglah Sharpe	Bishop Johnson School
11. Jean Banuole Jones	Bishop Johnson School
12. Ronald George	Bishop Johnson School
13. Eustacia Renner	St: Joseph Convent
14. Sylvanus Chapman	Secondary Technical School
15. Edward Alinyeh	Secondary Technical School
16. James Fornah.	Government Model Sec. School
17. Lillian Macauley	Government Model Sec. School
18. Kenneth Handerson	Prience of Wales
19. Abu B. Monitee	Albert Academy
20. John Peter Thomas	Prience of Wales
21. Ismail Rashid	Albert Academy
22. Willie Harding	Government Model Secondary School
23. Malphina Claye	Rokel Secondary School
24. Ethel Sackey	Annie Walsh Memorial School
25. Arthur Burney Nicol	Sierra Leone Grammar School
26. Certrude Gooding	Government Model Secondary School
27. Sainabou Ndow	Government Model Secondary School
28. Theresa Bahgura	Government Technical Secondary School.
29. Yvonne Jones	Sierra Leone Girls High School
30. Millicent Cline	Sierra Leone Girls High School
31. Zainab Gassa,a	St. Josephs Convent
32. Olatinka Pearce	I.M.G.S.
33. Sallimatu Tarawally	Municipal Secondary School
34. Walter Bessman	Collegiate
35. Felinda Harris	F.S,S,G.
36. Doris Sawyerr	St. Joseph Secondary School
37. Sarah Nicol	I.M.G.S.S.S
38. Lucia Amara	I.M.G.S.S.
39. Christianz Hollist	Y.W.C.A.
40. Christina Frazer	Technical School

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 41. OIris Cole | Freetown Sec. School for Girls |
| 42. Faigah Saffa | W.A.M.C. |
| 43. Kadio Turay | Ahmadiyah Muslim School |
| 44. Ibrahim Koroma | Ahmadiyah Muslim School |
| 45. Fatmata Koroma | Rokel Secondary School |
| 46. Kadiatu Koroma | A.M.S. |
| 47. Willmina John | Rokel Secondary School |
| 48. David Gboya | Ahmadiyah Muslim Sec. School |
| 49. Joan Elba | Bishop Johnson Memorial School |
| 50. Claudia Kayode | Roosevelt Sec. School for Girls |
| 51. Moira Browe | Methodist Girls High School |
| 52. Kenneh Pyne | Municipal Secondary School |
| 53. Sylvanus Newstead | Prince of Wales |
| 54. Bendu Mbayo | St. Joseph's Convent |
| 55. Huratu Waritey | Young Women's Christian Association |
| 56. Elvira Jannah Jones | F.S.S.G. |
| 57. Priscilla Cole | St. Joseph Convent |
| 58. Bally Koroma | Municipal Secondary School |
| 59. Adeyemi Thomas | Prince of Wales |
| 60. Christopher Manciles | Prince of Wales |
| 61. Lydia Gannick | Young Women's Christian Association |
| 62. Harold Jones | Sierra Leone Grammar School |
| 63. Flora Spencer - Auber | F.S.S.G. |
| 64. Franklina Frinity-Davies | Annie Walsh Memorial School |
| 65. Molley Conteh | Methodist Girl's High School |
| 66. Amy Bangura | St. Joseph's Secondary School |
| 67. Nellista John | Technical Secondary School |
| 68. Rangit Choudaky | Sierra Leone Grammar School |
| 69. Ronald George | B. Johnson Memorial School |
| 70. Tibni M. Turay | Bishop Johnson Memorial School |
| 71. Faiya Saffa | Collegiate Secondary School |
| 72. Sywia Wray - Grant | Municipal Secondary School |
| 73. Fatmatts Kamara | Roosevelt Secondary School |
| 74. Patricia McCormach | Methodist Girl High School. |