



OUT-OF-SCHOOL ADOLESCENT GIRLS: AN ISSUE YET UNSOLVED

Education may be considered as the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction, especially at a school or university. It facilitates learning and acquisition of knowledge that could be translated into ideas which could lead to personal development and empowerment as well as economic strengthening. An educated person is said to think more creative and twice as fast than an uneducated individual. Education can never be over emphasized especially at an early stage. Adolescence is a very vital time in the life of any individual, therefore, education is required to sharpen and mold the lives of an adolescent as he/she grows into adulthood.

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CFHI AT UNITED NATIONS WOMEN 62ND SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN



CFHI Director, Princess Oleribe Speaking at the (CSW) Programme

Since its inception in 1946, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) has annually gathered representatives of the United Nation's (UN) member states and non-governmental organizations with special consultative status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), to discuss and review the challenges and opportunities to attaining gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls globally. From these conferences previously held, several documents promoting women's rights;

recording the realities of women in the world; and establishing guidelines for monitoring gender main-streaming activities by the UN and other civil society organizations; have been developed and subsequently ratified by member states. Some of such documents are the 1953 Convention on the Political Rights of Women, which was the first international law instrument to recognize and protect the political rights of women; and the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Furthermore, detailed and country-by-country assessments on the status of women are usually presented during these meetings and they have been used to draft several human rights instruments overtime.

This year, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, also known as UN Women, are responsible for supporting the CSW activities, organized the 62nd session of the convention, which was centred on addressing the "Challenges and Opportunities in Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls". The event typically occurs for two weeks and in March to align with the celebration of the International Women's Day (IWD). As such, it took place at the United

Nations Headquarters in New York between the 12th to 23rd of March 2018. Across these two weeks, the conference is lined up with interactive talk sessions which are either side events or parallel events. The side events are organized by Permanent Missions and UN entities to provide an opportunity for representatives of UN entities and Members States to discuss the theme of the convention and other critical gender equality issues with participating non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Parallel events, on the other hand, are organized by selected NGOs to present their related work in line with the theme and provide an opportunity for the exchange of relevant information and fostering of inter-organizational relationships.

Centre for Family Health Initiative (CFHI) was privileged to not only participate in the side events that occurred but also to host a parallel event during the conference in collaboration with another Nigerian organization, Health Aid for All Initiative (HAFAI). CFHI organized a plenary talk session on Human Rights and Women Empowerment on the 20th of March 2018. The speakers during the meeting included the

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Dear Friend of the Family,

This month, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meeting, held in the United Nation, where we were privileged to not only participate in the side events but to host a parallel event during the conference. Details of the event can be found in this Month's edition.

Do you know that there are about 263 million children currently out-of-school?

Find out more from the article titled **"OUT-OF-SCHOOL ADOLESCENT GIRLS: AN ISSUE YET UNSOLVED"**. Also contained in this edition, are reports of all our current projects which occurred within the month of March.

It is with great pleasure that we bring you updates on most of our activities undertaken for each month and we hope to have met your expectations. I trust you will have an awesome reading experience. Enjoy!

Kind regards,

Princess Osita-Oleribe
Director CFHI.

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Director/Co-Founder of CFHI, Princess Osita-Oleribe; the Executive Director of HAFAI, Dr Ugochi Ohajuruka; Professor Obioma Nwaorgu; Barrister Akudo Amanambe and Dr Vetty Agala.

Agreed Conclusions

The outcome of the Commission's consideration of the priority theme during its 62nd session takes the form of agreed conclusions, negotiated by all Member States.

The Commission on the Status of Women adopted an agreed conclusions on "Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls" on 23 March 2018.



CFHI Director, Princess Oleribe and other panel speakers.

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It should be the basic foundation in the life of a child/adolescent. World Health Organization defined "Adolescence" as a period of life with specific health and developmental needs and rights. It is also a time to develop knowledge and skills, learn to manage emotions and relationships, and acquire attributes and abilities that will be important for enjoying the adolescent years and assuming adult roles.

But there is a concern; the number of out-of-school children is on the increase. **Presently, there are about 263 million children of which includes; adolescents and youths out-of-school.** The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) stated that "the rate of progress, or the lack of it, varies by age group; at primary level, the out-of-school rate has barely moved at all over the past decade, with **9% of children of primary age (about 6**

to 11 years), or 63 million, out of school. In addition, **61 million adolescents of lower secondary age** (about 12 to 14 years) and **139 million youth** of upper secondary age –one in every three – are not enrolled in school. These youth, between the ages of about **15 to 17 years**, are four times more likely to be out of school than children of primary age, and more than twice as likely to be out of school as those of lower secondary age".

The increasing number of out of school children is one aspect that remain unsolved especially in Africa and this has become a cause to worry. But another troubling aspect are the numbers of adolescent girls affected. Adolescent girls and young women seem to be topping the chart of the unschooled/out-of-school. UNECOS Institute of Statistic (UIS) figures confirm that, "across sub-Saharan Africa **one in every three children, adolescents and youths are out of school** - with girls more likely to be excluded than boys. **For every 100 boys of primary age out of school, there are 123 girls denied the right to education**".

What could be the problem? Generally, there are factors militating around education. Although, this may vary among countries as the economic strength could affect the rate of out - o f - s c h o o l children/adolescents. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) – "there is a gulf between out-of-school rates in the world's poorest and richest countries, with an upper-secondary out-of-school rate of **59%** across the world's low-income countries, compared to just **6%** in high-income countries". Notwithstanding, there are other factors that may contribute a great deal to the rate of out-of-school children/adolescents especially the Adolescent girls.

Gender norms: Some beliefs count as detrimental to the girl child as it clearly speaks to gender inequality, placing women as second-class citizen. In some communities, most see educating a girl child as a waste of time as she will end up as a wife embodied with the care of her children and husband; believing that a wife's duty is centred only on the home, hence, there's no

need for a formal education. From American International Journal of Contemporary Research: "Gender Beliefs and Spheres of Discrimination", a case study of Dasuha village, District Faisalabad state that; "The division of labour is based on the classic principle of public and private dichotomy. The work inside the house is supposed to be for the females, whereas the work involving outside mobility is the duty of male members of the society. A male is considered to be the main source of income. He works in the fields or employed somewhere else to win bread and butter for the family". This is not only restricted to the people of Dasuha in Pakistan, take for instance; from a research from british-council-gender-Nigeria-2012, "**Nigeria ranks 118 of 134 countries in the Gender Equality Index**". "The impact of inequality on the lives of girls and women is reflected starkly in health and education outcomes, nationally and between North and South. Levels of gender violence are also high, notably in the South where inequality is greatest".

Poverty is be one common factor that plays a major role in the increase rate of out-of-school children. The World Bank reported that; Nigeria has one of the world's highest economic growth rates, averaging **7.4%** but according to the UN, "**over 80 million Nigerians - 42.4% of the population** - currently live below the poverty line". With this, people are more concerned with what they would eat rather than the essential "education". From another report from World Bank "**At least 50% of the world over three billion people live on less than \$2.50 approximately nine hundred naira (N900) per day**". Families may not be able to afford the cost for a formal education, and if a choice has to be made eventually between sending a boy or a girl to school, the boy will usually be given more priority. There is a need for the quick interventions as this remains a concern.

Teenage Pregnancy: This is another hindrance that contribute to the increase of out-of-school adolescent girls. World Health Organization (WHO) stated "Approximately **16 million girls aged 15 to 19 years and 2.5 million girls under 16 years** give birth each year in developing region. It was also stated in a report by (WHO) that "An

estimated **5% to 33%** of girls ages **15 to 24 years** who drop out of school in some countries do so because of early pregnancy or marriage". United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) also stated that "the highest rates of early childbearing are found in sub-Saharan African". Early pregnancy forces adolescent girls to drop out of school just to fend for themselves and their babies. With this estimated rate, adolescents /young girls end up growing into adulthood without any vocational, educational attainment which may led to continuous circuits of poverty. Not restricted to the earlier mentioned, there still remains many other factors militating against Adolescent girl's education.

What has CFHI done about this; we have Facilitated payment of school fees for over **4,000 beneficiaries** with as low as **N25,000 per session** for children between primary – secondary school age as well as **solicited for waiver of certain fees** for children to attain basic education.

What we intend to do: CFHI intend to educating **over 2000 out-of-school children** within AMAC and Bwari LGA of the FCT investing as low as **N25,000 per child per annum**.

A report from the British Council states that "Nigeria has **10.5 million children out-of-school**, the largest number in the world". The question is: "what can be done to remedy this situation?" It's not left to anyone but to everyone, we need a collective effort to bring about an improvement.

HIV/AIDS PREVENTION AND EMPOWERMENT PROJECT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND POSITIVE MOTHERS IN OBI COMMUNITY (HAPPY) PROJECT

With the HAPPY project Community Enlighteners (COMETs) formally engaged and trained, a two-day practical training session was held. During this training, the CFHI project team introduced the organization's developed HIV Prevention and Sexual Reproductive Health

Education manual to the COMETs through several role play sessions. This was done to show them how the proposed Peer Education sessions at the HAPPY! Clubs were to be conducted, so that the young persons reached understand the information and in turn apply whatever lessons they learn to their sexual and reproductive health behaviors. Some topics addressed in these sessions include Unplanned Pregnancies, Gender Norms and Trends, Negotiation and Assertive Skills, and Positive Masculinity. Through the training COMETs were empowered and afterwards they were assigned to selected schools to foster relationship with the school authorities for an unhindered establishment of the clubs at the schools.

Several visits were made to the selected schools in OBI local government area and the expected support from the schools' head were attained on the condition that we attain approval from the State's Ministry of Education. The HAPPY project team had already begun the process of attaining this approval before the visits to the schools happened; and it hopes to have it ready before club activities begin at the resumption of the schools from the holiday.

Another visit was made to the General Hospital, Obi, to strengthen the partnership health facility has with the organization. This way the facility could provide the HAPPY team with technical support like data on positive mothers enrolled in the treatment site for vulnerability assessment by the team, referrals and baseline testing through the course of the project. The head of the health facility and the Nurse in charge of PMTCT services at the hospital were seen by the team and the necessary activities have begun. Lastly, the team also carried out Situation Analysis of the communities to be reached. This was done through Focus Group Discussions, Stakeholder Analysis and questionnaires to religious leaders, parents and relevant health facilities staff. The essence of this activity was to determine the hot spot areas and the interventions that would be sustained when implemented by the team.



Photo credit: ec.europa.eu.

Lets come together and send these children back to school.

SOME OF OUR FORTHCOMING EVENTS

WORLD HEALTH DAY

7th April, 2018

WORLD MALARIA DAY

15th May, 2018

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES

28 May, 2018

MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY

7th April, 2018

Interested in helping in any aspect of our work



Persons interested in donating to our activities, offering volunteer services or partnering with us, are always welcome. All CFHI's projects are community based and family-centred, so that our beneficiaries are reached with activities that proffer sustainable solutions.

Therefore, persons or organizations concerned with improving community health, sustainable socio-economic empowerment and the development of family-centred policies should please contact us.

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