P3.5. Promoting Young People's (Vulnerable Young People) Access to Quality Education · Taiye Timmy Fatoki, Life Vanguards Nigeria
E-mail: lagbajadon@yahoo.com

Background/Significance: Education of children with disabilities to a large extent was still lagging behind in the education sector. In the area of education, dwindling teaching quality, absenteeism, withdrawal and dropping out of school children, inadequate and unimplemented education policies, dilapidated infrastructures and inadequate teaching materials etc affected the quality of education in Osun state. The gap in enrolment and completion of primary education was in favour of the male child. This gender imbalance remains manifest in gross enrolment and completion of primary education. It coincides with the marked gender imbalances in access to education for girls (national literacy rate: 56% females and 72%males).Girls are mostly engaged in income generating activities by parents during school hour and often may lead to drop out of pupils, sexual exploitation and exposure to risky behaviours etc. Other marginalized groups in school enrolment are children with disabilities. This is due mainly to negative attitudes and practices, discrimination, government's lack of policy in support of their cause, poverty, lack of cheap access to education, cultural and religious biases etc. Thus exposing these categories of people to risky behaviours that could lead to contracting STIs.

Intervention/Activity Tested: Interventions used include:

- Community Participation in children education
- Policy intervention (Contribution to SEEDS document, child rights act and disability bill draft)

Methodology:
Location: Ilesa west, Ifelodun and osogbo Local Government Areas of Osun state (Araromi, Ikirun/eko-ende, Gbonmi/okebale communities respectively).

Setting: Community

Strategies:

- Lobbying and Advocacy
- Community mobilization advocacy
- Media advocacy
- Policy advocacy
- Training
- Establishment of community education committee (CEAC) in the three LGAs
- Establishment of school clubs
- Outreaches (International days- For the Disabled, Youth, Education and Children's day celebration).
- Monitoring and Evaluation.

Period: 2003-2007

Findings:

- Increased awareness and support for the education of girls and disabled children increases awareness on reproductive and sexual health among the said group and parents.
- Involvement of community members (community ownership of schools) also increased the chance of having more girls and disable children in school, thus reducing their exposure to risky behaviours.
- Increased advocacy on the rights of the Nigerian child (including their sexual/reproductive rights).
- There is an increased awareness and support for the education of girls and disabled children among key stakeholders in the state.
- School clubs establishment and IEC material production on education of the girl and disabled child helped reduced the exploitation of these group.
- The state government has equally improved on the education budget in the year 2007 budgetary allocation to education over the 2006 allocation (14.47%), with an allocation of 27.4%.

Lessons Learned: In-service training for serving teachers on family and community life education should be encouraged as a way of enhancing the capacity of teachers who would impact such knowledge on the pupils.

Awareness creation among parents through the PTAs should be encouraged in all schools as way of boosting sexual and reproductive education among pupils, as well as given a sense of community participation and ownership in the education of the child.

An appropriate and friendly media advocacy on reproductive and sexual education issues affecting girls and disabled children would go a long way to reduce their exposure to risky behaviour and shield them from sexual exploitation.