



# Women's Voice NEWSLETTER



A Division of Aggrey Community Project (ACP)

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## 'GIRLS TALK BACK' SHOW - True Life Stories

**T**he 'Girls Talk Back' Show is a true life story of victims of gender based violence and discrimination against the Girl-child and women in society. It is an intervention programme by the Aggrey Community Project (ACP) using cultural-based - choreo-musical performance through a stage Drama, Dance, Chant and Mime to sensitize the Girl-child to speak openly about violence and abuses they have experienced, witnessed, feared, or fought, with the sole aim of creating a better understanding between the girl-child and the society. It allows for the opportunity to discuss problems and experiences of abuse and violence.

Also, the objectives of the 'Girls Talk Back Show' are to raise public awareness on the issue of violence against women and girls and to create a platform tool for advocacy also to lobby for zero tolerance on all

forms of violence against the girl-child. The programme took place on the 3rd of December 2010 at Grassills Hotel (A3 Theater) to commemorate 16 Days Activism on Gender-Based Violence Against Women and the Girl-child. The show was attended by over 2,500 students including their teachers and School counselor under Education District V.

Mrs. Celina Njoku, a teacher in Amavivi Odofin High School, introduced invited dignitaries including the people from the press (both electronic and print media), the teachers and counselors from the invited schools. Corporate organisations were not also left out. In the course of the programme, there was distribution of Miso beverage drinks, juice, ice cream and writing pens to the students by Nestle Food plc, Unilever African Company (UAC) and others. More so, towards the end of the programme, refreshments were served with a bottle of Coca-Cola to all the participants. Police officers from Tsvu Police Station were on ground at the event to provide security.

### The Play

The stage play was delivered in English and local vernacular language by the cast. It started with a young man on stage with the actresses addressing the audience about the importance of a child, either male or female. Then actresses began to recross the stage reciting the important child rights laws. This was followed by a monologue by each of the cast on stage. The first monologue was titled 'Noble Heritage' while others are: 'Blood Trust and Rape', 'Teacher-See-Me', 'Kanganoo-Courts!', 'Orange-Sour Orange', 'Body PR, Durvivo and Mirror Mirror'.

### Noble Heritage

Father quarrelled with mother  
Because all she could provide him  
Were female children  
Five of us in a row  
He came home late from work  
Wouldn't find us  
Refused to send us to school  
Kept another woman who eventually gave  
him a son

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*Scene from the play 'Girls Talk Back'*

**W**e welcome you to the second half of this year. Our awareness campaign on Violence against Women and the Girl-child took a new intervention strategy with the introduction of cultural-based choreo-musical performance through a stage Drama, Dance, Chant and Mime to sensitise the Girl-child to speak openly about violence and abuses they have experienced, witnessed, feared, or fought; with the sole aim of creating a better understanding between the girl-child and the society. Also, we have a feature on the life of our late Executive Director Alhaja Rishi Raliat Danjigo.

As a follow up to the inauguration of ACP Anti-Violence Clubs in new schools, in Education District VI, Oshodi-Ikolo Local Government Area, ACP organised a one day workshop with the theme; 'Career Development and Gender Based Violence and Discrimination against the Girl-Child. This is to facilitate smooth transition from school to adult life. There are also workshop reports of ACP film documentary titled: 'Sound of Silence' and ACP Train Women towards 2011 General Elections; While, Are you listening? Is an issue for our perspective column.

Our regular cartoon and Workshop Photo Speak are there in this edition. Do remember to send us your comments and contributions.

Transition from youth to adulthood is a very turbulent period of life. It presents challenges for almost every young person. Youth with disabilities, indeed all vulnerable youth, may need extra support throughout their transition period in order to make informed choices and become self-sufficient adults. This includes planning for post-secondary education and their careers. To successfully make the transition from school to adult life and the world of work, adolescents and young adults need guidance and encouragement from caring, supportive adults who have distinguished themselves and are successful in their various careers.

In against this backdrop the Ajeogunle Community Project (ACP) organised a one day workshop with the theme: 'Career Development and Gender Based Violence and Discrimination against the Girl-Child' on November 18th, 2009 at Metropolitan College, Ibeju, Lagos. The workshop drew about 250 students and teachers from some Secondary Schools under Education District VI. They are: Ebu Junior Grammar School, Bamayo Junior Grammar School, Ajimoni Senior Grammar School, Ire-Akari Senior Grammar School, Central Senior High School, Ibeju/Ibelesha Junior Grammar School, Ibeju Senior High School, and Metropolitan Senior College.

Mrs. Chibwaha Akali the Executive Director ACP in her welcome address, said the workshop is a follow up programme on Youth and Sexual Violence and Inauguration of ACP Anti-Violence Club, which was carried out among the schools on 1st July 2009 at the same venue. The objective of the project is to create

awareness on Gender-Based Violence and Discrimination (GBV&D) and to guide students on the type of career to choose in life.

In her words, "We have inaugurated Anti-Violence Clubs in your schools in July 2009 and the essence of setting up the Clubs is to tackle the frequent abuse the girl-child faces in schools and even at home". More so, the Club was established by the Ajeogunle Community Project to address the needs of the Girl-child development and at the same time, to reduce incidence of violence and discrimination that may impede her development. This will be followed by proper sensitisation on Sexual Abuse and its effect on Youth's development and also the review of Training Manual for the School Youth Project. The manual was produced to assist the coordinator of each school where the ACP Anti-violence Club is established".

After delivering the welcome address, Mrs. Akali presented her paper titled Sexual Abuse and its Effect on Youth Development. What is sexual abuse? She stressed that this is a criminal form of sexual violence. Sexual violence is another word for sexual assault, and refers to the use of force or threats of such acts to inhibit sexual activities in a directed against person's sexuality by anyone regardless of his or her relationship to the victim in any setting. Nearly all sexual violence is committed by men. Men and boys can be victims of violence but majority of sexual assault survivors are women and girls with 95% of perpetrators male (Ontario, Canadian Sexual Assault Protocol, Ottawa 1997).

Akai advised the students to avoid early sex because their bodies are not developed enough to carry pregnancy and it could result in death. Besides, early sex can impede their future career. She stressed that when they are



Mrs. Chibwaha Akali the Executive Director, ACP presenting her paper on Sexual Abuse and its Effect on Youth Development.

## ACP Presents Film Documentary Titled: 'Sound of Silence'

Students and teachers from various schools under Education District V would not forget in a hurry a film documentary on Violence against Women and the Girl-child titled, 'Sound of Silence' on the Wednesday, 25th November 2009 at Awaji Ajegunfe Senior Secondary School, Agege.

Mrs. Fajana Adejumo welcomed the various schools and their teachers and she informed the audience on the purpose of the workshop, which is a one-hour Documentary titled 'Sound of Silence' in addressing various forms of sexual violence that occur in schools, offices, homes, and the public in general.

Mrs. Oluchi Akai, the Executive Director ACP in her welcome address, said "we have inaugurated ACP Anti-Violence Clubs in your schools. The essence of establishing these clubs is to tackle the frequent abuse the girl-child faces in the course of their development in life, and at the same time seek to reduce instances of violence and discrimination that may impede their development".

"Today, we are presenting to you a one-hour Documentary on youth victims of gender-based violence titled the 'Sound of Silence'. The Documentary showcases victims who have experienced different forms of abuse. The objectives of the project are to further educate the Girl-child on different form of abuse that occur against them, and they should not keep quiet, but learn to speak out, however they have experience this in their schools, homes, church, mosque and communities" Akai stated.

She said this will be followed by sensitization on gender based violence issues and also the review of Training Manual for the school youth. This manual will assist



Mrs. Oluchi Akai the Executive Director ACP addressing the participants.

the counselor at each school in promoting the ACP Anti-Violence Club members to be good ambassadors of Ajegunfe Community Project and also to become role models to other students.

Thereafter Mrs. Gbemisola Njoku was invited to review the ACP youth manual. She informed the participants that ACP is always organizing programmes for the youth; she reflected that in her own days as a Secondary School student they were taught nothing on sexual violence in schools and now that ACP brought it to her life. She further informed the participants that the ACP manual was prepared for all parties in District V which encompasses both women and the girl-child.

She further said the students that there was a lot of discrimination against the girl-child in the early days until ACP came up with its programmes. Also, she informed the

participants that ACP manual is divided into three which are Aims, Objective, and Impact. She further told the students that the manual includes annual events such as the year's 18 days Activities and other aspects in curbing and reducing violence in the secondary schools both in Mushin, Arinsole-Ofirin, and Ajegunfe-Island Local Government Areas.

Mrs. Njoku told the participants that "when you train up a child in the way he or she should go, when they grow up he or she would not depart from it". She also informed the gathering that ACP published the first book of the manual that includes the inputs of parents, resource persons, teachers, students. She encouraged Counselors, and Teachers to endeavor to make use of the ACP manual. She said the gathering that ACP manual is good and valuable. She thanked Cordell Fisher for his contribution in producing a female student named Zainab from Anwowo Secondary School, testified about what she witnessed when Cordell visited her School.

Furthermore, Njoku informed the participants that the ACP Anti-violence Club was initiated by the former Executive Director, late Roti Akai Dennis, and it is presently headed by Mrs. Oluchi Akai. She warned the students on the implication of unruly sexual behavior and the early use of pills to prevent pregnancy because of life, according to her, could cause damage to the womb.

She further encouraged students to report any form of sexual harassment against them by anybody and also encouraged the students to join ACP Anti-violence Club in order to fight all forms of social vices in the



Students during the Question and Answer Session.

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## ACP TRAINS WOMEN TOWARDS 2011 GENERAL ELECTIONS

The under-representation of women in political parties and government, has led to relegation of issues affecting women, and they are not well represented in the polity. This led to many civil society initiatives in Nigeria to increase women's participation in politics and public life so as to encourage more women to join political parties, get elected as party officials and therefore become involved in politics.

It is on this premise that the Ajegade Community Project (ACP) organized a One Day Workshop on Increasing Women Participation in Politics, which took place on August 13th, 2009 at Embassy Hotel (Oshodi) Apapa. The workshop drew of 60 participants, mostly grassroots women, in politics from Ajeromi-Ifeledun, Amuwo-Odofin and Apapa Local Government Areas. The essence of the workshop was to mobilize human and material resources to train women on the rudiment of politics toward 2011 general elections. And also, to afford the women the opportunity to share their experiences in politics, the challenges faced by them and learn from one another.

Mrs. Oluzhois Akai, the Head of Programmes, (now the Executive Director) of ACP, in her opening remarks, posited that this is the time for the women to join and be active in the political parties. She went further to say, that enough is enough of clapping hands and following the man behind. More so, women have been used for long as tools in the hands of men to achieve their selfish motives in getting in

political offices.

Her message is a clarion call on all women to participate actively in the political process, and "when they build synergy, they will succeed". She asserted that if they are determined and the will is there, then there would be a way. She spoke about Barack Obama, the black US President that nobody thought could win America's general election. "People were skeptical about President Obama initially when he first announced his intention to run for the American Presidential election but today, history has vindicated him". Akai charged the women to press to contest for political office that they will surely succeed when they don't give up.

She reminded the participants of similar workshop organized by ACP on Women Participation in Politics at the same venue. Then Mr. Kamal Bayewu, the present Chairman of Ajeromi-Ifeledun Local Government, was a guest and was

them a candidate soliciting for support to be voted the Chairman and nobody gave him a chance because he was the unpopular candidate. "Today, he is our Incumbent Local Government Chairman" she added.

Akhaja Bebe Olorunkemi, former Chairman of People Democratic Party Amuwo-Odofin Local Government Area, in her lecture, informed some of the participants that plan to contest for 2011 election on what it takes to contest for election. In her opinion, she said a candidate contesting for election has to first pray to God for direction, secondly, "seek for the support of your immediate family". She further stated that the world is now a global village due to computer technology. "As the world is changing, the people of the world, including women, must also conform to these trends of events".

It is no gain saying the fact that women constitute half of Nigeria's  
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Mr. Kamal Bayewu, the Chairman, Ajegade Community Project (ACP) speaking during the workshop on Increasing Women Participation in Politics.



## ACP TRAINS WOMEN ...

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population. They make essential and largely unacknowledged contributions to economic life and play a crucial role in all spheres of society. However, the established restrictive practices and constraints have not allowed them to take

advantage of their number in strategic positions in order to significantly influence the decision-making process. Some of these include relatively low educational development, poor socio-economic status, adverse

cultural and religious practices, the oppressive political environment and poor organisation among women.

To address these limiting factors, she asserted that there is an urgent need for many more educated Nigerian women to join political parties and form lobby groups. This is needed to provide leadership and direction for the masses of female voters in the country.

Female politicians must show greater interest in party positions and government. They must work within the parties and also build their own political constituencies to attain political power by winning public offices. Women who attain public positions through affirmative action must use such opportunities judiciously by promoting women's political agenda and by mentoring younger women. All educated women must dutifully, be familiar with and articulate the major points in the women's political agenda.

"All mothers, at the first point of socialisation must start breaking adverse cultural practices by treating their sons and daughters equally. Progressive policies must be consciously put in place by government to help integrate women into mainstream politics. Such policies will include expansion of educational opportunities for women and instituting social equality instruments such as gender quota (affirmative action) in recruiting for public position" Akal added.

## LEGAL CASES



illegally defiled by a 47 year old man for offence of rape. He is standing trial for committing an offence punishable under Section 222 of the original Code cap 17 vol 11, Laws of Lagos State of Nigeria, 2003.

■ Mrs. B came to our office to inform us of her case who became immensely incensed after the husband stopped with her mistress leaving the women and their seven year old son. She complained that the little boy just moves around the neighborhood without parental care and her fear is that the boy may be taken away by the father. Presently she said the boy does not attend school anymore. ACP has written a letter to the man and also to the welfare department of Ayemim-Edoaba Local Government Area for intervention. However the man is yet to respond to the letter.

■ Miss Y came to our office with a picture of herself with broken hand and leg. She narrated her story that her favorite beat her up when she came back home late from her place of work. She informed us that she explained to her that her office has an important project that they are working on and all staff must show commitment so it's complex. But the fiance did not believe her and he started beating her; in the process she broke a leg and hand.

She was also admitted to the hospital for a few days and she provided a doctor's report which will be attached to other documents as charges against the accused. The officer in charge has filed charges against the accused person under the Domestic Violence Law in Lagos State that was passed to law.

■ A 61 year old widow brought a case to our office ACP that her landlord wants to eject her from her own room apartment because she refused to let her daughter to have an affair with the landlord. She told us that she was given only 7 days notice to quit the apartment. ACP legal officer came in and took up the case, which is before the Magistrate court Apapa, Lagos. Besides, it was discovered from the receipt of the rent she showed us that she is not indebted to the landlord. The case has been adjourned till March, 2010.

■ An infant came (withheld) was allegedly fingered by a man. The man has been arraigned before the Magistrate Court Apapa, Lagos and is facing a one count charge of assaulting the seven month old baby for putting his finger into her private part and inflicting bruise on the child. The man has been charged for committing an offence punishable under Section 222 of the original Code cap 17 Vol 11 Laws of Lagos State of Nigeria, 2003. The case is in court.

■ A case was also reported at the Magistrate Court Apapa, Lagos that a seven year old girl (name withheld) was

## ACP TRAINS YOUTHS ...

Cont'd from pg 2

serious with their studies they can become Nurses, Doctors, Lawyers, Accountants and responsible members of the society. Again, she said they should not allow themselves to be led to travel abroad on the guise of a better job, that it could be a ploy to lure them into prostitution, which is harmful to their health and they could contact HIV/AIDS.

Thereafter, there was presentation on Career talk by four teenage persons. Dr. Ruthy Salami the proprietor, Nwanna Hospital, Engineer S.O. (Jaco) from Soft Tech Computers, Mr. Gabriel Ajimo an accountant and Mrs. Funmi Ademola a lawyer. Doctor Salami counseled the students on the requirements to become a medical doctor. He pointed out that it is rigorous (they spend the last school before they can achieve their goal in life. He said the girls should not be the work of a medical doctor as follows in view of the constraints in his hospital are talked. To him "it depends how organised you are"



Committee of students at their ACP first aid class. They are at the Career Development Workshop.

He said the Ordinary level credits, which must include the subjects of Physics, Biology, Chemistry, English Language and Mathematics are compulsory in the West African Examination Council (WAEC) for students that want to study medicine in the higher institutions. Joint Admission Manipulation Board (JAMB) requires English Language, Mathematics, Biology and any science subject for its entrance examination less the university. Also, he advised that the students, who desire to study medicine in any of the higher institutions, to be very serious with his or her studies. "One has to be a book worm. Besides, making good scores also in life, you have to work hard and persevere", he added.

Mr. Ajimo, an accountant by profession, said the saddest part there is no foundation that could be laid that has not been already laid. He said that the efforts of teachers should be appreciated. He said the students that they have a great role to play in my profession they choose in life. To be an accountant, there are some basic subjects that are compulsory there are English Language, Mathematics, Economics, Commerce, Accounting, etc. Government at the WAEC level Entrance into the university through JAMB require four subjects including English Language, Mathematics, Economic and any other social science subject. Ajimo stressed that Accounting is a unique and lucrative

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## "Girls Talk Back"...

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But through all these mother carried on. On the day they went to some the job. The new wife accused mother of witchcraft. That day father whipped mother naked in public and beat her to pieces. He was going to send us off out in the streets if not for the intervention of his brother. Who took us in when father wouldn't let us stay.

Claiming that same one told him that mother had told her that she was purposely giving him female children so that he would die without a son. He also asked mother to return us to our fathers as he was not we. Where not of his children.

Two years after we left father. My uncle who was leaving two of us and my mother called us to break the news that Day father was ill in the hospital and that the doctors said he needed blood. They had asked that I be brought to the clinic which used to be our family clinic because I and two of my other sisters were compatible with his blood type. The first thing that came out of me "no but he has a son" my mother still full of love said no my daughter, he is still our father. I heart my tears knowing that a had now become my responsibility as one of them who nurtured my mother and also rejected us because we were girls. (sob) I am only comforted by the fact that the source of his being able today is a daughter he rejected, born by a woman he humiliated. I am not a man but I am a father just as a son it can make my father proud like any son would. I will not beg for acceptance or forgiveness because it's not an answer to be a girl. I am proud of my heritage.

After watching all the monologues, some of the participants lined their mind on the issue of male preference and patriarchy in the homes, which is a social-cultural problem. Chiamaka Moses from Ndokwa Junior High School said



ACP girls' committee members, Mrs. Chiamaka Moses, Mrs. Aisha and Mrs. Victoria at the end of the session.

she believes in the fact that people should be proud of their heritage; they should always talk back against their societal life. Mrs. Ndokwa added that girls should be proud of themselves; they should be bold and believe that they are as capable as the boys in every human endeavor.

Another student opined that from when the girls performed on stage, it is a clear indication that the boys are not better than the girls. To the student, "it's the way our society portrays the male child to be better than the female child" is another reaction. A participant said parents should listen to their children, particularly the females, because they are vulnerable to sexual abuse.

Also, parents should set good example for their children and monitor the type of peer groups their children lean to avoid negative influence. She gave example of the monologue "Body PR" that some parents used their daughters to bait men to get patronage for their business.

In an advisory note, one of the students advised her fellow female students to dress decently because most students that were raped by the bad boys were attracted to them. Also she advised that they should not go out late in the night and they should not visit male friends alone. She gave an analogy that "we girls are like oranges, when you suck orange you don't put it in your pocket, you throw it away".

There were interviews of the actress who performed by the print and electronic media, Mrs. Chiamaka Moses, the School Counsellors and some of the participants at the end of the show.

## PERSPECTIVE

continued

children find it difficult to express themselves effectively by listening actively you can help him / her name what he / she is really feeling, thus removing what ever confusion might be befouling the mind.

**Listen for verbal and non-verbal clues:** That's why you must understand what your child is feeling and not just what he/she is saying. You can read in-between the lines by just watching the body language of your child, while he / she is talking.

### Avoid dead end questions:

While listening, don't try to ask questions that will require a yes or no answer. Rather ask questions that would help keep the conversation going by making your child give you more description and details.

### Don't be in a hurry to give a solution:

Sometimes they don't want a solution, just someone to listen. However, you can assist them in working out a solution when they ask or when you are sure that's what they need. Let him/her know

the different available solutions (in a suggestive manner) and let him/her choose. That way your child is committed to the decision and takes responsibility for whatever the outcome of the decision may be.

### No interruptions please:

Don't interrupt while they speak. No matter how much urge you feel to do that.

### Keep your surprises or disappointments to yourself:

Don't express your disappointments, while your child is speaking. If you do, you might shut him / her up. Rather, put your self in his / her shoes and try to understand his / her situation. If you must mention your surprises or disappointments, do so calmly and "diplomatically" after listening him/her out. Also have a number of possible solutions handy.

### Don't ever judge or criticize:

If you do, he/she may never approach you any more. And that's a dangerous position to put your child and yourself in. Active listening is a skill every parent must learn and develop in order to be truly effective. A listening parent will get

his/her child's co-operation on any issue faster than a generous but insensitive parent would. So if you want to influence your child's loyalty and trust for life and generally reduce parent-child conflicts and deepen the parent-child relationship in your home, then you need to take one "listening pill" every millennium of the day. It will not only calm you but also make you your child's hero/heroine for life. To help you develop this new skill faster, here's a quiz that I suggest you take at the end of each day.

The listening quiz at the end of each day can you answer "YES" to these questions?

- 1. Today my child told me some thing I didn't know
- 2. Today I looked into my child's eyes as I listened
- 3. Today I asked my child a question and then listened to the entire answer without interrupting.
- 4. Today I put down whatever was in my hands to give my child my full attention.
- 5. Today I was available to my child when he/she wanted to talk to me.
- 6. Today as I listened to my child, I held back at least one question.
- 7. Today I asked my child at least one helpful question.
- 8. Today I laughed at something my child said.

**Happy parenting!**

## ACP TRAINS YOUTHS ...

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profession since every organisation needs the services of its associates.

Again, he told an audience man: be disciplined and prudent with money. Hard work is another virtue in successful man (s). There are either successful professional bodies a student that wants to become an Accountant (as register with, do some professional examination and be qualified as a professional accountant that will get going through higher institutions. These include Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), Association of National Accountants of Nigeria (ANAN) and Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA).

In conclusion, he charged the students to be committed to their studies, so that they can be successful in their chosen profession. Also, Engineer (Jaiye), the Managing Director of Soft Tech Computers, also made a presentation on the importance of Information Technology (IT), while Barrister (Femi) Adeniji, a lawyer, by profession, also spoke.

On the whole, the workshop was very successful. Those registered, the students became better informed about self, ability to make informed career choices, the need to be more serious with their studies, and they were motivated to contribute positively to the recovery and their society. Also, there was enthusiasm among the students to join the ACP Anti-violence Club.

## ACP Presents Film Documentary...

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school, and other things that could cause barriers. Mrs. Ekeke concluded her presentation by imploring the participants to applaud ACP for what they are doing.

The climax of the event was the showing of the documentary to the participants. The documentary titled "Sounds of silence" contains stories of victims of violence ranging from rape, sexual harassment to women trafficking. Some violence against women and girl child were also seen by actors and actresses in the film. After watching the documentary, some of the participants spoke their minds. Miss Prince Okeke from Imo State Senior High School started by praising ACP for the Documentary and she recalled her personal experience when she was still living with her aunt, and how her aunt's boyfriend's son attempted to rape her.

Miss Grace Aghoye from Ogburn Junior Secondary School shared all her tales to be very vigilante in their surrounding based on what they watched in the documentary. Miss Sade Cynthia of Sanilife Junior Secondary School told the participants that she has learnt to dress well and mix with the right people. Missor Basije Omenyi from Anambra Ogburn Junior Secondary School started by encouraging participants to always believe in yourself and be choiced

girl to always dress well.

Mrs. Ibeanyi started by commending ACP for the wonderful initiative. She advised all participants especially the girls that they should take care of themselves. She also advised that the girls should not be carried away by flattery from men such as "you are beautiful and lovely". She recalled an incident that occurred in her school premises how a form is was discovered and up all date the form is used in the school laboratory. She advised the females to be careful.

Mrs. Kulejele, a counsellor in one of the invited schools, started her speech by asking every participant to rise and observe a minute silence in honor of the founder of ACP, Alhaji Abd. Rabbu Danjibo. Mrs. Kulejele told the participants about a girl who got pregnant and reported to abortion but eventually it affected her womb. In her, if she had told somebody she would not have found herself in this predicament. She concluded that abstinence is the solution to unwanted pregnancy.

The programme ended around 1.15 pm and Mrs. Akai gave the vote of thanks. She thanked every one for honoring the invitation and their responses, contributions by the students who share their personal experiences. Thereafter refreshment was served to all the participants at the venue.



