

# **YOUTH CONCERNS AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES YCDI – AFRICA**

## **YOUTH SAFETY AND SECURITY PROJECT**



**DECEMBER, 2012**

**FIRST INTERACTIVE FORUM ON SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA**



**OGUDU SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, HILLVIEW ESTATE, OGUDU GRA,  
OJOTA LAGOS, NIGERIA 5<sup>TH</sup>, DECEMBER, 2012**

## **1.0 PREAMBLE**

“As we struggle as a nation to contend with the harsh tests of terrorism, insurgencies, violence, crime and environmental dislocations along with the economic and social pressures of an expanding and very mobile population, the burden of law enforcement and protection of lives and property increases exponentially”(Mr. Remi Makanjuola, Chairman Board of Directors , Lagos State Trust Fund).This places a continuous and heavy burden on every citizen both young and old, to join efforts with law enforcement officials to provide safety and security for all in the neighbourhoods, community and society at large.

Social inclusion demands that young people should be included in all decision making processes relating to public safety and security. This becomes imperative with the growing anecdotal evidence showing that most young people in their early adolescent age have some involvement with crime and violence, usually considered as minor and limited. Such involvement is often considered as short-span anti-social behaviour which adolescents will grow out of naturally, without any major need for institutional intervention. However, interestingly, recent research findings have shown that young people will continue to be involved in crime and violence without any formal intervention; instead it will become serious, if a deliberate action is not put in place to discourage such involvements (Home Secretary’s introduction to ‘No More Excuses’, Home Office 1997).

It is against this background that the Youth Concerns and Development Initiatives (YCDI-Africa) identified public schools in Nigeria as important social institutions with the greatest potential to serve as a locus for crime prevention amongst young people within the school age. The Youth safety and security project is therefore one of our attempts at complementing the efforts of government as well as supporting the schools in educating young people on burning issues of public concern on safety and security in Africa.



*The YCDI-Africa Safety and Security Project Management Team in Ogudu senior High school, Hillview Estate, Ogudu GRA.*

In line with the above, YCDI-Africa in collaboration with the Health and Life Planning Club, a school-based youth club, with the support from other stakeholders organized an interactive forum on safety and security for students on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December, 2012. The forum held at Ogudu Senior High School, Hill view Estate Ogudu GRA, Ojota, Lagos.

The forum is expected to create a platform for the students to gain understanding about the other alternatives to crime and violence; for example, how they can use resources provided by nature in the environment to compensate for institutional lapses, for the provision of recreational facilities which should have been ready alternatives and avenues to channel their strength and energy.

## **1.0 SETTING THE STAGE**

The programme commenced with an opening prayer by a teacher and the National Anthem led by the school band. Introductions of invited guest, speakers were made, and the panel of discussants were ushered to their seats. The audience was made up of teachers, students, parents and media representatives and other stakeholders. They were entertained by the Health and Life planning club, who gave an *Acapella*, remix rendition of "*We Are the World*" and received a resounding applause for their effort. Thereafter, the welcome remark was made by the Principal of the School Mr Stephen

Oyebola. In his speech, he welcomed all the participants including the students to the school and conveyed his appreciation to the YCDI for packaging the programme and for considering his school a focal school for the programme. He further mentioned that the significance of the project cannot be underestimated, particularly in the yuletide season, when ‘men and women of evil intent are moving up and about looking for younger ones they may mislead.’

Following the Principal’s remarks was an Opening remark by Ms Onyinye Onyemobi, founder and Executive Director, Youth Concerns and Development Initiatives. In her speech she welcomed the participants on behalf of the board and staff of YCDI-Africa. She further stated that the interactive forum was designed to bring together students, teachers, parents, relevant safety and security experts and stakeholders on youth and safety in Lagos State. She mentioned that the objective of the interactive forum was to educate the students on critical safety and security measures they should be aware of as well as strategies they can adopt to stay free from crime and violence during the Christmas vacation. According to Ms Onyinye, the deliberations at the forum would achieve the following;

- Identifying the key security and safety issues of concerns in students’ immediate environment.
- Encourage the students to seek out alternative avenues to crime that will help them to influence their environment and society at large.
- Sensitize the youths on security tips that can help them stay away from danger during the Christmas break.

In continuing her speech, Ms. Onyinye reiterated that seasoned resource persons had been invited to educate and inspire the students on the various selected topics and at the end, participants would decide on priority challenges affecting the students in their environment both in school and at home, as well as agree on follow-up strategies through joint problem solving approach.

In concluding her speech, she thanked the Principal and the school management team, particularly the Guidance Counsellor of the school, Mrs Unegbu for their support and collaboration in ensuring the success of the programme. Finally, she wished all the participants a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.



*From left: Ms. Onyinye Onyemobi, Founder & Executive Director YCDI, with Erica Licht, United States Fulbright fellow*

## **2.0 PAPER PRESENTATIONS AND DELIBERATIONS**

This session was anchored by Ms Onyinye Onyemobi, who introduced the speakers and the topics to be presented. She urged the students to pay attention to the presentations, take notes for further references and write down questions or comments if they have any. Thereafter, she wished the participants a happy deliberation and invited the first speaker for her presentation.

### **2.1 PRESENTATION 1**

**Safe vacation tips; Avoiding sexual traps:** This was presented by Mrs. Lydia Onuoha, a member of the Lagos State School Basic Education improvement team. Her presentation focused more on the reasons why teenagers in secondary schools should not be involved in sexual relationships. She highlighted the importance of romance and sex in

marriage and advised the students to focus their energy on activities that would enhance their physical and mental development. She further emphasized that engaging in premarital, premature sex can endanger the life of teenagers, increase the risk of then contracting HIV and also reduce the chances of teenagers performing exceptionally in their academics. Her presentation also touched on the key points to choosing good friends. She concluded her presentation by advising the students to stay away from any relationship that might jeopardize the attainment of their life long dreams. Finally Mrs. Onuoha advised the students to monitor the kind of discussions they indulge in with their friends and to speak out in cases of molestation and any form of sexual harassment by both friends and strangers.

## **2.2 PRESENTATION 2**

**No drugs, No fights and No guns; Approaches and Alternative to Violence:** This discussion was led by Erica Licht, A Fulbright scholar from the United States. Her presentation focused on how youths define and understand the causes of conflict. It proffered solutions that encouraged the utilization of sensory and environmental engagements as an alternative to conflict and violence. In the course of the presentation, students were asked to participate in a partner-based trust building and sensory exercise. The interactive discussion was based on objects of negative power and a participatory activity on how to replace them with positive meaning and ideas. The objective of the session was to teach and push the students to consider critical decisions about their engagement with the urban environment and to introduce them to the concepts of alternatives to violence as well as the psychological and emotional benefits of the natural environment.

Finally, Erica concluded this session by proposing that love for one another is the ultimate way to positively avoid violence or crime of any form.

## **2.3 PRESENTATION 3**

**Understanding Social Safety and Security:** This paper was led by Mrs Eunice Adetola, founder and Executive Director, Esther's Group for Women's Development in Nigeria. She commenced her presentation by applauding the organisers of the programme for the platform provided for young people to be sensitized on the issues of safety and security and also for inviting her to speak to the generation of young Nigerians that will give Nigeria a new identity.

Mrs Adetola reiterated that it was Christmas season and the need to be security conscious cannot be over emphasized. She further stated that the level of poverty in the society has become so alarming that people, including teenagers would do anything just to earn a living. She mentioned that the focus of her discussion would be on the ways that young people can guard themselves to ensure that they do not fall victims and prey to the men and women of evil intent who have saturated the urban social space particularly in cities such as Lagos.



*Mrs Adetola addressing the students at the interactive forum on Safety and security*

Her presentation was summarized under the following nugget points below;

- **Friends**- Show me your friends and I will tell you who you are, say no to peer pressure and you can stay away from crime and violence
- **Safety** – Avoid late nights, don't be a night crawler, stay vigilant, ensure your family know your whereabouts at all times, keep your phones constantly on and charged. Attend events and parties that you know the hosts or organisers do not be careless with your drinks and food when in a party. Leave the party hall or venue before people get too drunk and violence breaks out. Do not get into any kind of brawl with friends or strangers.



- **Get Busy** –An idle mind is the devil’s workshop, spend your Christmas vacation helping your parents. There is always something to do. Become a volunteer for work in a saloon or super market. Define your interests and passion. Use the holiday period to find where you can learn more on such skills and passion you have identified. Look out for mentors who can help you do better in your academics. Don’t go about looking for people to give you money. You can do some support work for your parents, family friends and relations and you may get a more rewarding thank you. Do not give up your beautiful future for momentary pleasure.

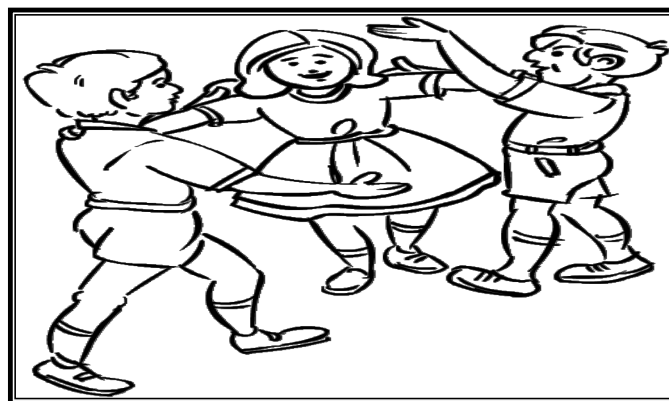
In concluding her presentation, Mrs Adetola advised the students to stay positive, trust in God and they will have a brighter future. She ended her speech by reciting a poem by Edgar Albert Guest: "Myself and I"

### ***Myself and I***

*by Edgar Albert Guest.*

*I have to live with myself and so  
I want to be fit for myself to know.  
I want to be able as days go by,  
always to look myself straight in the eye;  
I don't want to stand with the setting sun  
and hate myself for the things I have done.  
I don't want to keep on a closet shelf  
a lot of secrets about myself  
and fool myself as I come and go  
into thinking no one else will ever know  
the kind of person I really am,  
I don't want to dress up myself in sham*

*I want to go out with my head erect  
I want to deserve all men's respect;  
but here in the struggle for fame and wealth  
I want to be able to like myself.  
I don't want to look at myself and know that  
I am bluster and bluff and empty show.  
I never can hide myself from me;  
I see what others may never see;  
I know what others may never know,  
I never can fool myself and so,  
whatever happens I want to be  
self-respecting and conscience free.*



### **3.0 SECURITY AND SAFETY TIPS: VITAL POINTS TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHILDREN**

This was presented by Ms. Onyinye Onyemobi for the Lagos State Security Council. She started this session by thanking the Lagos State Government for their tireless efforts in ensuring that Lagosians sleep well with their two eyes closed. She further reiterated the words of Governor Babatunde Raji Fashola (SAN) at the 6<sup>th</sup> Town Hall Meeting on security organised by state government in collaboration with the Lagos State Security Trust Fund (LSST) on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December 2012. He mentioned that security is like oxygen, when you have enough of it, it's taken for granted but it becomes scarce there is serious pandemonium. Security is expensive but every step taken in the right direction to either prevent new criminals from emerging, curtailing the excesses of those who are already in the career of crime, shortens the distance in the end. Security is everybody's business. Ms. Onyinye further informed the students that time had passed when teenagers are excluded from security concerns with the assumption that they are too young to make reasonable contributions. She urged them to be vigilant and report any strange behaviour or personalities they find in their neighbourhoods, particularly in the festive period. She announced the Lagos state local emergency phone numbers as (767 and 112) and asked to students to ensure that they use the numbers to report any cases of distress around them at any time.

Finally she encouraged the students to seek and gain more security conscious and education as well as practise them until they become good habits. She summarized with the following points;

- Youths must avoid membership of secret cults and criminal syndicates
- Avoid ostentatious lifestyle and rigid routines that they could easily get identified with, like going to particular places at a given times or days, following particular routes every time.
- Avoid lonely routes and do not disclose schedules to strangers and others you may have any reason to doubt.
- When confronted with a weapon remain calm and if taken hostage cooperate with your captors but try to cautiously appraise the places of captivity.
- Do not wear provocative dresses in religiously conservative areas.
- Be civil with members of the public.

With the following points, Ms. Onyinye Onyemobi called on the Guidance counsellor of the School Mrs. Unegbu to give the closing remarks and vote of thanks on behalf of the principal of the school. This was followed by a short closing prayer by a student, the National Anthem by the school band.

The programme ended with a networking and refreshing session at exactly 3.00 prompt.



***N/B:*** The next edition of the programme continues in February, 2013.

*On behalf of the board and staff of YCDI-Africa, we wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year in advance*

## **About YCDI- Africa:**



*Forging active youth partnerships for safety and security and human rights in Africa*

### **Who we are:**

Youth Concerns and Development Initiatives is a youth led non-profit Organisation set up in January 2011, to promote the rights of young people in Africa, particularly those who suffer from all kinds of socio-economic and political marginalization and fall between the ages of 18-35years.

### **Contact us:**

Lagos office  
13 Adesiyun Street,  
Off Ayinde Street,  
Off ogudu road, ojota Lagos

**Follow us on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/youthconcerns and development initiatives>.**

**Email: [ycdi.africa@gmail.com](mailto:ycdi.africa@gmail.com)**

**Website: [www.ycdi\\_Africa.com](http://www.ycdi_Africa.com)**

**Phone:** 08037511909

**Annex 1:**

**PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES**

**INTERACTIVE FORUM ON SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR YOUTHS**

**Organized by**

**Youth Concerns and Development Initiatives (YCDI-AFRICA)**

**In Collaboration with**

**Health and Life planning club**

**Date: Wednesday, December 5th, 2012**

**Venue: Ojota Secondary School,  
Hill view, Ogudu**

**Duration: 1pm -3pm**

- |  |              |
|--|--------------|
| • Arrival and Registration of Participants   | 12:30-12:58  |
| • Opening prayer/ National Anthem  | 12:59-01:00  |
| • Welcome Remarks by the representative of the principal   | 01:00-01:03  |
| • Opening Remarks by YCDI , Ms Onyinye Onyemobi  | 01:04-01: 05 |
| • Paper Presentation 1: Understanding Social safety and Security; as a teenager<br>Mrs. Eunice Adetola         | 01:05-01:15  |
| • Paper Presentation 2: Safe vacation tips; avoiding sexual traps by Mrs. Lydia Onuoha                         | 01:16-01:26  |
| • Paper Presentation 3: No drugs, No fights and No guns; Approaches and Alternative<br>to Violence Erica Licht | 01:27-01:37  |
| • Questions and answers  | 01:38-01:58  |
| • Dance, Drama or joke by Volunteer students   | 01:59-02:09  |
| • Closing remarks /prayers/  | 02:10-02:15  |
| • National Anthem  | 02:16-02:20  |
| • Light Refreshment  | 02:21-02:30  |
| • Departure  | 02:30-3:0    |

