



“Negative peer influence can cause school dropout”  
- Feola

## Gown and Town: Synergy for Enhanced Societal Impact



A Community Engagement Project among Stakeholders in Adolescent Health and Well Being in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria



Students' engagement brief

## Background

Adolescence (the period from 10 to 19 years) is a time of immense opportunity. It is also a time when some individuals start engaging in health-risk behaviors such as smoking, drinking alcohol and unsafe sexual practices<sup>1</sup>. Studies we conducted in Oyo state, Nigeria, revealed that these risky behaviors are more common among older adolescents who are not enrolled in senior secondary school<sup>2, 3</sup>. In Oyo state, more than half (53%) of adolescents who should be in senior secondary school are not in school; <sup>4</sup> even though education is currently free from primary to senior secondary school<sup>5</sup>. These adolescents who are out of school are exposed to the likelihood of engaging in unhealthy practices.

### ***What did we set out to do?***

Our team conducted a community engagement project to sensitize stakeholders (adolescents, teachers, private school owners and government) about the importance of senior secondary school enrollment

### ***How did we engage with our key audience?***

Teachers and secondary school students reviewed existing research data highlighting the role of senior secondary school enrollment in protecting against unhealthy habits

Groups of teachers came together to draw maps of their immediate community and identified and discussed about issues within these communities that promote or hinder senior secondary school enrollment

In and out-of-school adolescents took photographs of things and activities within their communities that promote or hinder senior secondary school enrollment, discussed their findings and came up with suggestions for improving senior secondary school retention.

### ***What can students do to promote senior secondary school retention?***

Students should:

- (i) focus on their studies and understand that completing secondary education is essential for their overall health and development and also reduces their chances of engaging in behaviors that damage their health
- (ii) discuss with counselors or other trusted adults when they have problems that can prevent them from staying in school
- (iii) refrain from setting up and joining groups that encourage truancy and initiation of risky behaviors

### **Further reading**

UNESCO International Bureau of Education. (2010/2011). World Data on Education. 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2010/11. Retrieved from [http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Nigeria.pdf](http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Nigeria.pdf) on 20 February, 2020

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UNICEF. (2012). Progress for Children. A report card on adolescents. Geneva, Switzerland: UNICEF

<sup>2</sup>Olumide AO. (2017) Unpublished. Prevalence, Predictors and Costs of Health-Risk Behaviors among Adolescents in Oyo State, Nigeria. PhD thesis, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

<sup>3</sup>Olumide, A. O., et al. 2014. Predictors of substance use among vulnerable adolescents in five cities: findings from the well-being of adolescents in vulnerable environments study. *Journal of Adol. Health* 55.6: S39-S47.

<sup>4</sup>Federal Ministry of Education (2017). Nigeria Education Indicators 2016. . Viewed online at <http://www.nemis.gov.ng/downloads/fold/Nigeria%20Education%20Indicators%202016.pdf> on 10 February, 2020

<sup>5</sup>Editor. Live Times. Why I declared free education in Oyo - Makinde. Nov 10, 2019 Live Times. Viewed online at <https://www.livetimesng.com/why-i-declared-free-education-in-oyo-%E2%80%95-makinde/> on 10 February, 2020

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