

A SURVEY OF CAUSES OF YOUTH VIOLENCE IN IKUN-EKITI

**A REPORT SUBMITTED BY DR. GABRIEL S. BOMIDE TO FIDUO
COMMITTEE FOR YOUTH REHABILITATION**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Violence by young people is one of the most aggressive forms of violence in society. Youth violence is traumatizing and can lead to injury, disability, and even premature death (Spoth, Redmond & Shin 2000).

Data provided by the Youth Saving Lifestyle Creation Initiative (2015) indicates a dramatic increase from 2010 to 2014 in the incidents of drug abuse, drug crop cultivation, trafficking, cultism, youth violence and HIV/AIDS in Nigeria. This increase clearly makes the task of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) more challenging.

In a recent investigation, Balogun (2015) reported that Ekiti State is gradually becoming the hub of teenage prostitution and related social vices. Specifically, female teenagers reportedly engage in unbridled quest for illicit drugs, sex and cultism.

Youth violence is systematically becoming a serious problem in Ikun-Ekiti. This can have lasting harmful effects on the local economy, the perpetrators, as well as the victims and their family, friends, and the community as a whole.

Anecdotal evidence of youth violence incidents in Ikun-Ekiti has been reported (Awoyemi, 2014 & Ajayi-Odoko, 2015). These reports indicate that violent behaviors among Ikun youth include drug and alcohol abuse, physical assaults, gangs attacks, weapons use, charms use, vandalism, elders' abuse and homicide. The single incident of homicide so far reported in a youth violence involved the premature death of Mr. Wale Owoeye, on December 8, 2014.

At its meeting of December 28, 2014, the FIDUO General Assembly felt an urgent need to address the issue of youth violence in Ikun community. Accordingly, a FIDUO Committee for Youth Rehabilitation was constituted, with a mandate to investigate possible causes of this problem and to make recommendations for prevention and intervention.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The Committee for Youth Rehabilitation met through a conference call to discuss the strategy for fulfilling its mandate. The committee resolved to conduct an exploratory youth survey in Ikun in 2015. The primary purpose of the survey was to identify possible causes of violent and aggressive behaviors among Ikun youths, with a view to recommending strategies for prevention and intervention.

The design for the survey was a descriptive research. Data was collected using a 14-item questionnaire (see Appendix 1). The data-gathering tool was developed and validated by a team of experts led by Dr. Gabriel S. Bomide, while the administration of the questionnaires was coordinated by Mr. Adesola Dada during the Grace Project International (GPI) Mission 2015 held at Ikun-Ekiti on November 17, 2015. A total of 21 subjects participated in the survey. Subject selection could not be randomized due to some practical difficulty.

3.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Data were collated, tallied and analyzed. Data analysis was implemented using simple descriptive statistics (i.e. frequencies and percentages). In order to simplify the process, the data was divided into two sections – demographics and perceived causes of youth violence.

Demographics of Respondents

In order to ascertain the demographic characteristics of the respondents, the 21 subjects who completed the survey were asked to provide some pertinent demographic information. Tables 1-4 (see Appendix 2) illustrate the demographics of the respondents.

Perceived Causes of Youth Violence

In order to assess the perceived causes of youth violence, the respondents were asked to rate their perceptions of some possible underlying factors on a 5-point scale – Disagree, Strongly Disagree, No Opinion, Agree, and Strongly Agree. The results are presented on Table 5 (see Appendix 3).

4.0 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data presented on Tables 1-5, the following major findings and conclusions emerged from the survey:

1. The demographics of the respondents indicate that 48% are males and 52% are females, with ages in the range of 16 and above 35. Majority of the respondents (43%) are between 21 and 25 years old (see Tables 1 and 2).
2. The highest level of education of the respondents ranged from primary school to university while a greater percentage of the respondents (29%) are university graduates. In addition, the respondents are predominantly

Christians by faith with a percentage of 76%; only 19% are Muslims and the remaining 5% belong to “other” unspecified religion (see Tables 3 and 4).

3. Regarding the perceived causes of youth violence in Ikun-Ekiti community, factors to which over 50% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed were considered significant. Based on this criterion, the following factors were identified in rank order:
 - Educational factors (1)
 - Alcohol and Drug abuse/Parental factors (2)
 - Economic factors/Psychological factors/Peer influences/Gangs influences/Influence of significant others/Community factors/ Political factors (3)

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this survey have brought some important issues to light that require urgent attention. Based on these findings, recommended process actions that could help address the problem of youth violence and related social vices in Ikun community might include the followings:

1. The finding that Educational factors and Alcohol and Drug abuse ranked as the top two possible causes of youth violence has important implications for the development of culturally relevant youth education programs. To this end, it is recommended that FIDUO should form strategic partnership with a non-governmental organization, such as the Youth Saving Lifestyle Creation Initiative (YSLCI), to promote awareness of the dangers of youth violence and drug abuse in Ikun community.
2. In efforts to empower Ikun youths, FIDUO should partner with Helping Hands International (<http://helpinghandsinternational.biz/index.php>) to provide sponsorship opportunities for youths to acquire relevant job skills, learn a trade, or start a business.
3. The evidence that parental factors ranked second as possible causes of youth violence underscores the importance of parental role in reducing

the problem. To this end, it is recommended that government should encourage both public and private schools to partner with and support parents in training their children through a mentoring program.

4. The finding that an overwhelming majority (95%) of the respondents are Christians and Muslims suggest that religious leaders have a great opportunity and responsibility to instill sound moral values into the youths - such as tolerance, peace, love and respect for others.
5. The community should focus on improving educational outcomes for youth as a core solution to reducing violence (Bomide, 2014). To this end, retired teachers and other volunteers can be recruited as mentors to help students stay on track in school, stay away from crime, and contribute fully as adults and productive members of the community. It is also essential that the community, in collaboration with government provide an environment conducive to learning so that all students can successfully complete high school and attend post-secondary or vocational training schools that lead to well-paying jobs in Ikun town or elsewhere.
6. Concerted efforts should be made to provide rewarding employment opportunities for youth upon graduation from post-secondary or vocational training schools. This will help redirect the interest of youths to productive ventures. Some basic ideas for creating jobs for Ikun teeming youth population has been articulated by Kolawole (2015). To this end, local philanthropists, successful entrepreneurs, political office holders and community-based organizations should be encouraged to provide the much needed support to ensure gainful and rewarding employment opportunities for all our youths.
7. In order to help troubled youth live better lives, government should ensure that they have access to culturally appropriate mental health services that promote healing and empowerment. Youths that are currently engaged in violent behaviors should be identified and referred for mental health services, including treatment and rehabilitation.
8. A platform should be created for the rehabilitation of victims of youth violence, including provision of basic needs such as food, housing, clothing and medical care, as well as prayer and counsel to meet their spiritual needs.

9. While the community should embrace the use of dialogue and peaceful means to resolve conflicts, the existing laws on violence should be enforced when necessary to serve as a deterrent to offenders. This will help create an enabling environment for peace, harmony, stability and overall development of Ikun community.

References

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Project Coordinators

- Adesola Dada, RN, MA; Florida, USA
- Gabriel S. Bomide, Ph.D; New York, USA

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- Mrs. Bimbola Olotu, Nigeria
- Mrs. Tola Ajayi-Odoko, Nigeria
- Grace Project International, USA

FIDUO Committee for Youth Rehabilitation

- Rev. Canon Femi Olajide, Canada
- Mrs. Margaret A. Bomide, USA
- Mr. Charles O. Olatunde, U.K.

Appendix 1: Ikun Youth Survey Questionnaire

Introduction

Youth violence in Ikun community has recently been reported (Awoyemi, 2014). This and other anecdotal reports have shown that some violent behaviors among Ikun youths include drug and alcohol abuse, physical assaults, gangs attacks, weapons use, charms use, vandalism, elders' abuse, and homicide.

The primary purpose of this survey is to identify possible causes of violent and aggressive behaviors among Ikun youths, with a view to recommending strategies for prevention and intervention.

Instruction

Please answer the questions in Sections A and B below to the best of your ability. Your responses will be treated confidentially. Thank you for participating in this survey!

Section A:

Please check the applicable box next to each of the followings:

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age: 10-15 16-20 21-25 26-30 31-35 Above 35
3. Highest level of education:
 No formal schooling Primary school Secondary school
 University Polytechnic Vocational or Trade school
4. Religious Affiliation:
 Christian Muslim African Traditional Religion Practitioner
 None Other

Section B:

How well do you agree with the following statements concerning possible causes of youth violence in Ikun community? Check only one applicable box.

	Factors	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Alcohol and Drug abuse (e.g. Beer, Marijuana or Cannabis, etc)					
2.	Economic factors (e.g. poverty, lack of employment opportunity or low wages for unskilled labor)					
3.	Educational factors (e.g. lack of education or training needed to get well-paying jobs; lack of awareness of the dangers of youth violence)					
4.	Psychological factors (e.g. anger, anxiety, nervousness, aggression, etc)					

5.	Parental factors (e.g. poor parental supervision, parental aggression and harsh discipline of children and youths)					
6.	Peer influences (e.g. having friends who deal in illegal activities such as drugs and prostitution)					
7.	Gangs influences (e.g. youth gangs who deal in drugs, prostitution or other illegal activities)					
8.	Influence of significant others (e.g. adults teaching young people to engage in acts that support violent behavior)					
9.	Community factors (e.g. the					

	extent to which a community uses violence as a normal method of resolving conflicts; and lack of community youth centers for recreation, sports, arts and crafts)					
10.	Political factors (e.g. the extent to which a community enforces existing laws on violence by arresting and prosecuting offender)					

Appendix 2: Respondent Demographics

Table 1: Respondent Gender

Gender	%
Male	48
Female	52

Table 2: Respondent Ages

Age	%
10-15	00
16-20	05
21-25	43
26-30	10
31- 35	24
Above 35	19

Table 3: Respondent Level of Education

Level of Education	%
No formal education	00
Primary school	05
Secondary school	19
University	29
Polytechnic	24
Vocational or Trade school	24

Table 4: Respondent Religious Affiliation

Religion	%
Christian	76
Muslim	19
African Traditional Religion Practitioner	00
None	00
Other	05

Appendix 3: Perceived Causes of Youth Violence

Table 5: Perceived Causes of Youth Violence

Factors	Disagree (1)	Strongly Disagree (2)	No Opinion (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Alcohol and Drug abuse	-	-	-	43%	57%
Economic Factors	-	-	-	52%	48%
Educational Factors	-	-	-	62%	38%
Psychological factors	-	-	-	48%	52%
Parental factors	-	-	-	43%	57%
Peer influences	-	-	-	52%	48%
Gangs influences	-	-	-	52%	48%
Influence of significant others	-	-	-	42%	52%
Community factors	-	-	-	48%	52%
Political factors	-	-	-	52%	48%

NOTE: Column percentages may not sum exactly 100% due to rounding error.

End of Report