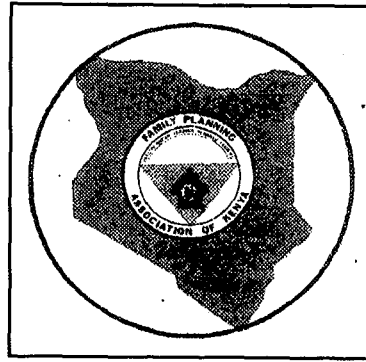


## FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION OF KENYA SUPPLEMENT

# Parents must get involved in guiding the youth



## WORLD POPULATION DAY

In 1997, research was carried out among youth and their parents in Nyeri and Nyahururu Municipalities, in Central Province, Kenya. The purpose of the study was to increase understanding of young peoples lives and concerns in the regions, as well as to solicit the views of their parents. The study was used to assist in designing a programme for youth in Nyeri Municipality, "Youth Health Project." This project is a collaborative effort being undertaken by a group of organisations including the Ministry Education, the Ministry Health, the central government Population Council and FPAK. In all, 1,525 unmarried youth aged 10 to 24 and 403 of their parents or guardians were interviewed.

This report reviews the main findings of the study and was compiled by Annabel Erulkar, Frederick Nyagah, George Mwangi, George Kaggwa and Shamton Waruru.

### In School Youth

Two third of unmarried youth aged 10 to 24 were enrolled in school at the time of the survey. While they are still in school, adolescents spend a large amount of time in school and doing homework. On average, youth spend about six hours per day in school, including the time they spend travelling to and from school. They spend an average of 3 hours doing homework, about 1 hour doing domestic chores and about 2 hours involved in socialising, recreation and relaxation.



### Youth Communications and sources of Information

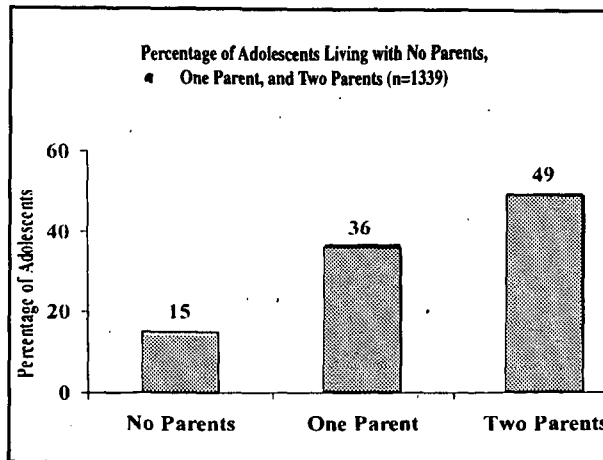
Youth were asked with whom they discuss issues related to growing up, such as body changes and boy/girl relationships. Most young people did not discuss these issues with their parents but with their friends. Over 60 per cent of youth discussed issues with friends of the same age. Thirty-six per cent of youth discussed these issues with a teacher and only 21 per cent discussed with their parents.

Youth were asked where they got information related to growing up, such as information on puberty and sexuality. Most youth got this type of information from the radio or TV, newspaper and magazines, and friends. However, it is not clear what kind of information youth got on these subjects and whether that information was accurate. Teachers were also important sources of information on growing up. Only one fifth of youth received information on growing up from their parents.



### Families

Less than half of the adolescents aged 10 to 24 live with both of their natural parents. One third of adolescents live with just one natural parent and 1 out of 7 live with neither parent. Many of these young people either live with other relatives, on their own, or have other living arrangements.



### Drug use

Drug use seems to be more of a problem for boys than for girls. About 4 out of 10 boys have tried cigarettes or alcohol, compared to very few girls. Even though they have tried cigarettes and alcohol, this does not mean that they use them regularly. Two out of 10 boys had smoked cigarettes in the last month and one quarter of boys had gotten drunk in the last year.



### Peer Pressure

Many young people have been pressured to have sex, either by people of the opposite sex or by their own peers. About one third of adolescent boys say that they have been pressured to have sex. Most of the pressure that they receive is from other boys. Girls are also pressured to have sex, but the pressure that they receive is mostly from male friends or boyfriend.



### Sexual Activity

A few young people aged 10 to 14 have had sex (16 per cent of boys and 5 per cent of girls). By age 20 to 24, 9 out of 10 unmarried boys (or 90 per cent) have had sexual intercourse. At the same age, two thirds (60 per cent) of girls have had sex.

### Pregnancy among youth

Among the girls and boys who have had sex, about one quarter of the girls have had a baby. However, only 1 out of 10 boys admit to having caused a pregnancy. This suggests that girls are being made pregnant by boys outside their age group or that boys are not being truthful in the survey.

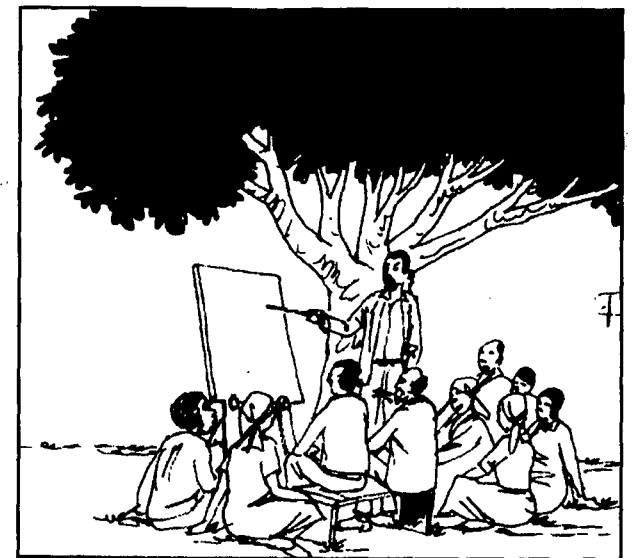


### Sexually transmitted infection's

Among the youth that have had sex 9 per cent of boys and 4 per cent of girls report that they had had a sexually transmitted infection. However, often sexually transmitted infections remain without symptoms and undetected, particularly for girls, so the number could be higher.

### Parents' view of family life education (FLE)

The vast majority of parents in Nyeri and Nyahururu believe that family life education (FLE) should be taught in secondary school. Ninety-four per cent (94%) of parents thought that youth should be taught FLE at the secondary school level. Also, 4 out of 5 parents (80%) felt that FLE should be taught in primary school.



### Parents' Communication with Youth

Parents in general did not feel comfortable discussing issues to do with growing up with their adolescent children. Many parents did not feel knowledgeable enough to discuss body changes during puberty or HIV/AIDS with young people. In addition, parents also said they felt embarrassed to discuss many topics including unwanted pregnancy and body changes during puberty.



### Conclusion

It is clear that parents need to play a more active role in ensuring that their children get information as they grow up. They need also to support others who are involved in helping the youth. The time to do so is now, before it is too late.