



LOCAL NEWS

NGO makes case for sex education in schools

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THE Swedish Association for Sex Education (RFSU) has termed teachers' difficulties and discomfort in teaching key sex education topics as a challenge that needs to be urgently addressed.

The RFSU Project Manager, Dr Cuthbert Maendaenda said in Dar es Salaam over the weekend that many teachers have in most cases failed to overcome their personal motives towards issues in sex education, hence denying students understanding of some crucial aspects.

"Some people think that we do not have sex education in our schools, the fact is that the education is there but students are not able to get full dosage as teachers have been skipping some information when teaching," he said. He added that the Education Circular No. 3 of 2000 want sex education be taught in schools but to date some schools have been reluctant to abide.

"The political will is there but community norms, cultures and ignorance seem to be barriers as many think that teaching sex education in schools is equally to teaching sexual intercourse education," he said. Sex education is a broad term used to describe education about human sexual anatomy, sexual reproduction and other aspects of human sexual behaviour.

Although some form of sex education is part of the curriculum at many schools, it remains a controversial issue in several developing countries, particularly with regards to the age at which children should start receiving such education, the amount of detail which is revealed and topics dealing with human sexuality and behaviour. Dr Maendaenda believes that increased school dropouts that are caused by early pregnancies is a vivid sign of lack of adequate sex education in schools, as children grow in dark and hence they are prone to sex related risks.

He added that sex education is more of helping children understand themselves biologically and get prepared to face the world so that they do not fall victims of sexual predators. University of Dar es Salaam Lecturer, Dr Kitila Mkumbo, found in his research that teachers are not comfortable teaching sex education.

"Though teachers expressed commitment to teaching sex education in schools, they expressed difficult and discomfort in teaching most of the key sex education topics," reads the study's findings. Dr Mkumbo also noted that an overwhelming majority of teachers in both rural and urban districts supported the teaching of sexuality education in schools and the inclusion of a wide range of sex education topics in the curriculum.

"This implies that declaration of positive attitudes towards teaching sex education alone is not enough, there is a need for facilitating teachers with knowledge, skills and confidence to teach various sex education topics," he recommends.