

Module 2: Evidence based approaches to sexuality education for adolescents - Adolescent health and development with a particular focus on sexual and reproductive health - Assignment

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Barriers to the expansion and improvement of sexuality education in Nigeria

1. Lack of political will and commitment on the part of government to address sexual and reproductive health needs of the country.
2. Mass illiteracy.
3. Negative socio cultural and religious practices.
4. Gender inequality and discrimination.
5. Poverty.

Major highlights of the barriers

1. The lack of political will on the part of governments and leaders has resulted in the neglect of reproductive health activities, sexuality education and reproductive rights of youths and adolescents, while the WHO Macroeconomic commission on health. for example, proposes a per capita expenditure on health per person of \$34. Nigerian government expends less than \$5 on an individual on health; since reproductive health is a part and parcel of health care in totality, this affects the provision of basic reproductive health services and is one of the reasons why the reproductive health indices in the country are worsening by the day.

2. Illiteracy. The literacy level in the country is put at 54%. The link between education and reproductive health is two-directional. Education is closely related to improvements in family health and to falling fertility rates. In turn, children born into smaller families are more likely to be sent to school and to complete more years of schooling.

Educating youths and adolescents benefits the whole of society. It has a more significant impact on poverty and development than infrastructural developments. Educating the girl child is the most influential factor in improving child health and reducing infant mortality.

3. Negative socio cultural and religious practices. One-third (36.5 million) of Nigeria's total population of 123 million are youth between the ages of 10 and 24; by 2025, the number of Nigerian youth will exceed 57 million. Lack of sexual health information and services places these young people at risk for pregnancy, abortion, sexually transmitted infections (STI), and HIV/AIDS. In addition, early marriage and childbearing limit youth's educational and employment opportunities. Yet, effective, innovative programs can provide youth with the sexual health information and services they need.

4. Gender inequality and discrimination.

Around the world are many social, cultural and economic barriers to hamper youths and adolescent sexuality development.

Among the barriers:

- *In many societies, parents see limited economic benefits to educating girls.* Daughters attending school are less available to help with household chores and childcare for younger siblings. Cultural norms are that sons support parents in old age while girls marry out and leave their parents.
- *Decisions about schooling for girls are often influenced by social norms related to sexuality and marriage.* In traditional societies where chastity is highly valued, parents may be reluctant to allow girls to travel to school, be taught by male teachers and have close contact with boys. Parents often expect girls will marry at an early age, not needing education.

Disparities between initial enrolment rates for girls and boys are much greater than differences in dropout rates. This suggests that the major challenge is to get girls into school. Parents increasingly recognize the need for education to improve their children's chances in life — but this understanding is slower to come in the case of girls. Increasingly many parents also understand that the family's long-term economic needs will be best served by providing better health care and education for fewer children, rather than relying on larger numbers.

5. Poverty. Poverty is a major hindrance to access to qualitative reproductive health services. When family resources are limited, parents usually give higher priority to other issues like food, shelter, and security to the detriment of health and other reproductive and sexuality issues.

Assignment documents

1. [IPPF. From evidence to action: Advocating for comprehensive sexuality education. London: IPPF; 2009.](#)
2. [UNESCO. International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education. Volume I. The rationale for sexuality education. Paris: UNESCO; 2009.](#)
3. [UNESCO. International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education. Volume II. Topics and learning objectives. Paris: UNESCO; 2009.](#)
4. [UNESCO. Levers of Success. Case studies of national sexuality education programmes. Paris: UNESCO; 2010.](#)