

## 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 expanding or improving sexuality education in Nigeria**

The following are the factors militating against the expansion and improvement of sexuality education known as Family Life and HIV Education (FLHE) in Nigeria.

#### **Cultural and religious inhibition**

In Nigeria, open discussion of sexuality issues is considered an immoral thing especially among young people, which promotes the culture of silence in almost all cultures in Nigeria. The belief that discussion about sex will promote sexual immorality among young people is another factor that inhibits sexuality education in Nigeria. Religious organizations also do not welcome discussions on sexuality in the public; children who ask questions on such topic are called children of the devil.

#### **Paucity of trained personnel**

Sexuality education requires special training for proper delivery. The teachers trained in this art are called FLHE teachers in Nigeria. However, there are very few teachers trained in FLHE delivery compared to the number of pupils and student who need the service.

#### **Lack of financial resources to implement the project**

FLHE implementation requires resources to be effectively implemented. Teachers need to be trained and as part of the plan. Anti AIDS clubs are to be established in schools. These require a lot of resources but Government is not allocating resources towards this direction. The little achievement made on FLHE implementation came from international donors and recently, Global Fund on HIV round 9 agreed to fund implementation of FLHE across the 36 states of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory.

#### **Exclusion of out of school and other vulnerable groups in the programme**

One of the limitations of FLHE programme design is the lack of proper plan to capture hard to reach adolescents such as out of school adolescents (school dropout youth in vocational job) and people living with disabilities. These categories of people constitute a large percentage of adolescents who might even constitute dangers for in school adolescents if not properly managed. They mostly engage in crimes such as sexual abuse and violence. Also people living with disabilities need special programmes specifically designed for them. This may include providing sexuality information on Braille book for the blind. This was piloted by Association for Reproductive and Family Health (ARFH) where I work and great results were recorded for the evaluation of the project.

## **Lack of functional youth friendly services**

For sexuality education to be comprehensive and effective there is the need for functional youth friendly centres in schools, hospitals, public and private places that could provide essential services for the youths. This is found in small number in Nigeria cities and most of them are not functional.

## **Lack of routine operations research on the efficacy of comprehensive sexuality education**

Another factor limiting the expansion of sexuality education in Nigeria is lack of evidence based impact assessment of the FLHE programme which could serve as a proof of the importance of the project in the country. Since the introduction of the programme in 2003, there is no formal impact assessment that is nationally disseminated which can serve as achievement of the programme.

## **Poor public enlightenment and awareness creation about the programme, which makes support from major stakeholders difficult**

Public enlightenment about sexuality education and FLHE programme is very poor in Nigeria. Many stakeholders, especially parents, religious leaders and even political leaders who should play an important role on the project are not fully aware of the programme. Many political leaders do not know what FLHE is all about, seven years after its operations in the country. This makes getting support from stakeholders difficult.

## **Lack of adequate monitoring and evaluation on the part of Ministry of education**

In Nigeria, when programmes are not well monitored, effectiveness becomes difficult. The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and Ministry of Education who are in charge of Education in Nigeria find it difficult to monitor the progress and process of implementation of the project, which makes effectiveness difficult.

## **Young people and other stakeholders are not actively involved in curriculum design and implementation**

Parents or guardians are the first and primary sexual health educators of children. What parents say and do can have a powerful influence on the development of healthy sexuality in children. Unfortunately, parents and young people themselves are not involved in curriculum development and implementation. If people are not involved in a project, they don't consider that as their project and they might not be actively in support. This is one of the challenges facing the expansion and improvement of sexuality education in Nigeria.

## 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.](#)