

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 sexuality education in Yemen

The following are some of the barriers to expanding sexuality education in Yemen:

1. The strong resistance to sexuality education by the community (families, governmental officials and religious leaders). Cultural taboos remain the major obstacle in discussions about sexual education.
2. Abstinence-based approaches are prioritized in school-based HIV prevention programmes. The abstinence-based approach is the main approach used to educate young people about sex: abstaining from sex until marriage as the best means to prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases infections and unwanted pregnancies. This approach is no longer appropriate for educating young people on sexuality; it doesn't meet the young people's interests and needs.
3. Unavailability of adequately trained teachers for sexuality education: this is one of the major barriers for expanding sexuality education in Yemen, in addition to the low morale of teachers on teaching sexuality.
4. Unavailability of appropriate teaching and learning materials.
5. Overcrowding: overcrowding of schools with large numbers of students make it difficult to adopt participatory and skill-based teaching methods.

Suggestions on overcoming these barriers

To overcome these barriers the following interventions are suggested:

- Community mobilization and increasing the awareness and commitment of policy-makers and programme managers to make young people's sexual and reproductive health among the essential components of the national population, family planning, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS programmes.
- Advocating large-scale sensitization programmes to reach parents, schools, governmental officials, religious leaders, making special focus on religious leaders as most of the cultural taboos originate from religious misunderstanding. Documenting and disseminating the evidence of the impact of the sexuality education can be useful in achieving community support. In order to advocate sexuality education rather than abstinence-based approaches, young people can participate in sensitizing the community to the importance and urgency of sexuality education.

- Supporting the Ministry of Education to develop a detailed teaching curriculum for health education, together with the relevant teaching materials and advising on the best methods for positioning this topic in school programme. Creative solutions must be advocated to train teachers in sexuality education, to develop appropriate teaching materials and adopt high quality teaching methods. In addition, it is important to encourage developing partnerships with the relevant ministries to achieve the goal of a national sexuality education programme.

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.](#)