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Comprehensive sexuality education: Experiences in building community support & responding to backlash

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“Most adolescents & youth do not yet have access to comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), despite repeated intergovernmental agreements to provide it, support from the UN system, & considerable project-level experience in a wide range of countries and research showing its effectiveness.”

Report of the Secretary General, United Nations on 'Assessment of the status of implementation of Programme of Action of the ICPD', Commission on Population and Development, April 2014.





What did it take to scale-up and sustain Udaan, a school-based adolescent education programme in Jharkhand, India ?



The case of Pakistan

Context:

- National policy on sexuality education in place
- Little government-led implementation

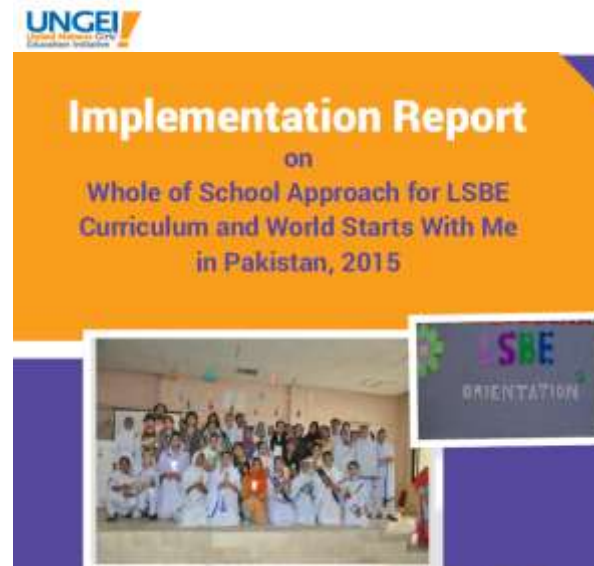
Rutgers Pakistan & Aahung built community support

- By strategically choosing issues to address
- By framing their work with care
- By having sensitive content vetted
- By actively reaching out to all to explain what they were doing

They dealt with backlash

(from an alliance of media/politicians/religious leaders)

- By using supportive media persons as intermediaries
- By arranging for journalists to visit the schools & see for themselves what was going on
- By organizing information sharing/discussion sessions



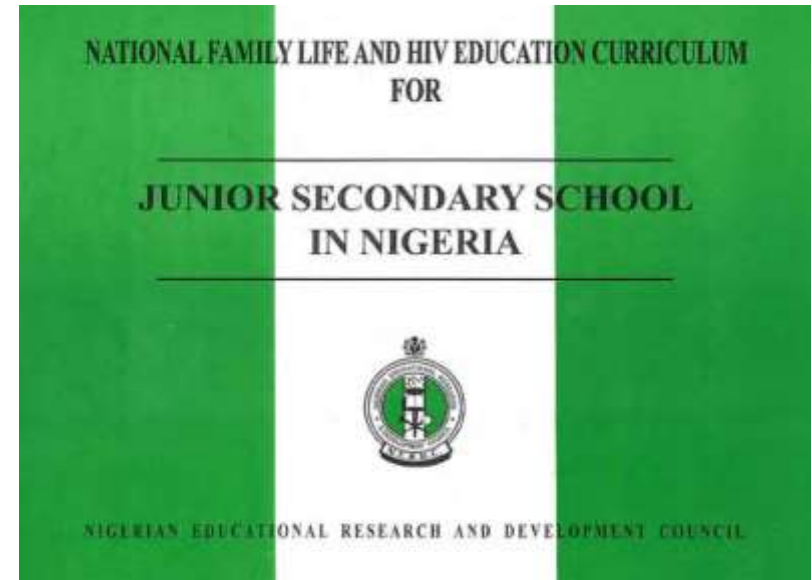
The case of Nigeria

Building support for national policy formulation

- A group of NGOs led by *Action Health Incorporated* demonstrated the need, feasibility & effectiveness of sexuality education in projects
- They formed a national coalition to advocate for a national policy & strategy
- The coalition worked with internal & external change agents to contribute to a policy & national scale up plan – an eight-year journey

Building support as nation-wide scale up occurred

- State level advisory & advocacy committees involving teachers' unions & parents groups
- Proactive, energetic & on-going consultations continued with supporters & opponents



The case of Texas, USA

Context:

- State government does not fund sexuality education
- No obligation on schools to conduct sexuality education

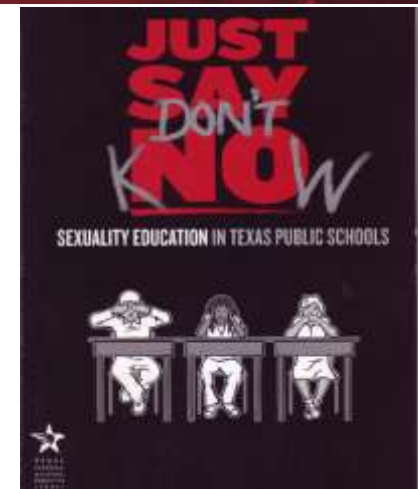
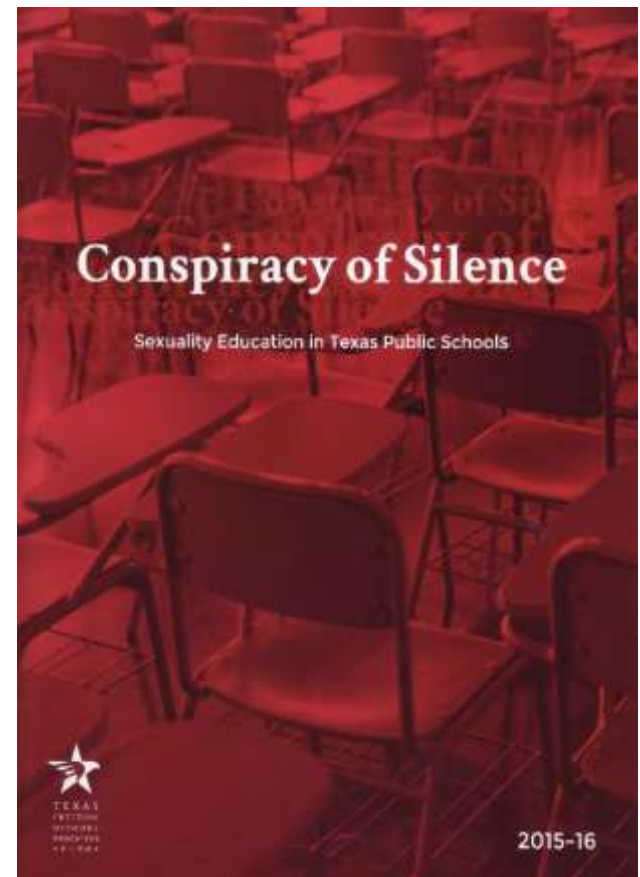
Building community support

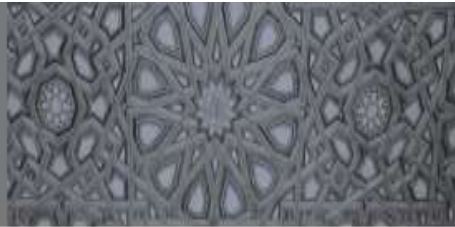
- By advocating with school board members about the link between dropout prevention & teenage pregnancy prevention
- By working with school board members to appoint supporters of sexuality education in school health advisory councils
- By training & supporting advisory council members

Dealing with resistance/backlash

(from groups of parents often supported from the outside)

- By lobbying through school advisory council members, relying on trusted relationships that have been built in advance





OCTOBER 2012

BY MAMDOUH WAHBA
AND FARZANEH
ROUDI-FAHIMI

THE NEED FOR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS IN EGYPT

Two Steps Forward, One Step Back

SRH education in schools in Egypt has experienced both progress and setbacks. In 2010, the press reported that the Minister of Education ordered the "removal of the contents related to male and female genital systems and sexually transmitted diseases from the school curriculum in the science books for grade 9."²⁹ The order was not adopted, either because it was never actually given or because the minister retracted it. The only real change has been the inclusion of reproductive systems in the science books of grade 8 instead of grade 9, which child health advocates saw as a move in the right direction. However, in 2011, following the revolution and the subsequent political instability, the newly appointed minister ordered the removal of the same topics, along with family planning methods, from the 12th grade curriculum for the sake of shortening its contents.

