Training course in adolescent sexual and reproductive health 2021

Comprehensive sexuality education provision

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Question 1

Why do adolescents need comprehensive sexuality education (CSE)? – identify one reason.

Adolescents need CSE for the following key reasons:

1. CSE prepares adolescents for a safe and productive life amidst the issues like gender-based violence, gender inequality, early & unintended pregnancies, HIV & other sexually transmitted infections.
2. CSE positively presents sexuality, emphasizing values such as respect, acceptance, tolerance, non-discrimination, equality, empathy, responsibility and reciprocity.
3. CSE provides age-appropriate and phased education about human rights, gender equality, relationships, reproduction, sexual behaviors risks and prevention of ill health.

Question 2

What according to you is the biggest operational constraint in the provision of CSE in your country, and why?

Delivering CSE has been possible in even most conservative settings, however, enabling environment doesn't always translate into effective implementation mainly due to operational challenges such as effective teacher preparation and support, development of appropriate curricula and learning materials, & planning, financing & monitoring. In Pakistan, CSE implementation is severely limited due to lack of capacity, political will & coordination between government sectors besides the strong cultural and religious resistance against teaching about any matters related to sexuality and bodily development. (CDA & YAN 2017; Svanemyr et al. 2015).

Question 3

In what way could CSE be integrated into your country's educational curriculum?

In Pakistan, the available evidence (Ali S. et al 2015; Chandra-Mouli 2018; Ijaz 2019; Ito 2020; Rutgers 2019; The NEWS. 2019) show the following key elements for CSE integration:

1. Building support among the government institutes for curriculum development and teachers training.
2. Presenting evidence from global /local level through policy dialogues involving education authorities.
3. Drafting the CSE materials and soliciting endorsement from education authorities, explaining the content and helping formulate recommendations per topic.
4. Organizing orientation and sensitization events for the top officials from education sector.
5. Ensuring inclusion of CSE/life skills-based education into education policy & education curriculum.

Question 4

Identify three strategies that Aahung and Rutgers used to build community support for CSE in Pakistan?

Following are the three strategies that Aahung & Rutgers used to build community support for CSE:

1. Understanding local context through community-based research as foundation for program design.
2. Strategic selection of issues for designing and framing the curricula in light of context and sensitivity.
3. Involving stakeholders and institutionalizing by engaging relevant gatekeepers at various levels and institutionalized programs within existing systems to draw credibility and support.

Question 5.1

Within the ecological framework, what are the levels of influences that need to be understood when planning to deliver sexuality education to adolescents?

The various levels of influencers include the adolescents themselves at individual level; their parents and peers at interpersonal level; teachers and school administration at organization level; community gatekeepers and religious leaders at the community levels; and finally the national, regional and global policies, political and religious context at the societal level.

Question 5.2

In the case of Aahung and Rutgers, who were the gatekeepers or influential people in the lives of adolescents that were engaged and sensitized?

Parents were the main gatekeepers who influence lives of adolescents in both cases. Aahung supported the sensitization and counseling of gatekeepers, such as parents and community members, by school administrators and teachers to improve engagement and transparency of the program. Rutgers Pakistan created a Parent Involvement Strategy to develop parents' interest in their children's education and to enhance communication and transparency of the program's content and objectives.

Question 5.3

In your context, which gatekeepers or influential people would need to be engaged and sensitized to deliver CSE?

In Pakistan, experiences (Ali 2015; Chandra-Mouli 2018; Ito 2020) show that involvement and support of the community, particularly family decision makers, can greatly enhance adolescents' capacity to exercise their rights. Moreover, community involvement alongside CSE programs

decreases the potential for social backlash and creates greater possibility for programs to become sustainable through community ownership.

Question 6

What strategies did Rutgers and Aahung use to overcome resistance to CSE in Pakistan?

1. Rutgers engaged a group of respected journalists from print, radio, and television to facilitate dialogue in the affected provinces and also assisted textbook writers from Bureau of Curriculum in drafting a module for life skills-based education, resulting in its inclusion in provincial textbooks.
2. Aahung strategically used opportune moments to stress the value of their work such as during Ramadan and after widely publicized reports of gender-based violence emerged.

Question 7

How is CSE different from sexuality education?

Sexuality education started with focusing on prevention of unintended pregnancy (1970s), prevention of HIV (1980s), awareness about sexual abuse (1990s) and to address online bullying (2000 onwards). CSE goes beyond educating about reproduction, risks and disease. According to definition, CSE is a curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality. It aims to equip children and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to realize their health, well-being and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others; and understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.

Question 8.1

What are the considerations that the International Technical Guidance suggests when designing a school-based CSE program?

It emphasizes the need for CSE programs to be guided by evidence, adapted to the local context, and logically designed to measure and address factors such as beliefs, values, attitudes and skills.

1. Follow and align with all relevant national policies, guidelines, regulations and laws.
2. Adopt clear goals, concepts and learning objectives.
3. Follow the life-cycle approach providing information in age-appropriate manner.
4. Ensure that the curriculum is politically, religiously and culturally appropriate.
5. The contents have to be practical, effective, adopts interactive and participatory educational approach.

Question 8.2

What did the Egyptian Family Health Society (EFHS) do to understand the needs of adolescents related to sexuality education before initiating their school-based SE program?

EFHS undertook a "learn by educating" needs assessment exercise. It began by using a biology lesson about male and female reproductive organs within the official school curriculum for the seventh grade. Ample time was allocated during session for responding to anonymous written questions from students. Some questions would be answered, while the rest of the "sensitive" questions were referred to the Youth Health Hotline operated by the Society.

Question 8.3

What were the protocols used to respond to sensitive questions asked during the EFHS' seminars?

For answering the "sensitive" questions, they either referred to the Youth Health Hotline operated by the EFHS. All written questions during seminars were collected-white papers for boys and blue for girls. These were received at the headquarters and were examined by members of the Scientific Committee. The students' questions proved to be a very valuable and revealing source of information. EFHS published a book with those questions to help others working to promote SRH in Egypt and the region.

Question 9.1

Describe a CSE initiative in your country that you believe has affectively promoted CSE for adolescents in or out of school.

Rahnuma (the IPPF Member Association in Pakistan) has a comprehensive training programme and tailored resources for peer educators. It includes a CSE training manual in English and Urdu and a toolkit on how to provide youth-friendly services, complemented by short docu-drama videos. Rahnuma runs regular training and refresher sessions for the peer educators who are also supported to deliver information to out-of-school youth. There are youth resource centres managed by peer educators for young people to meet; monthly CSE sessions and regular sensitization and awareness raising sessions are organized by peer educators to deliver sexual and reproductive rights information to young girls who are confined to their homes. Rahnuma trains young people to become peer providers; counsellors; street theatre performers to raise awareness about CSE and sensitize target communities and become CSE advocates; Peer educators are also members of youth networks that raise community awareness about specific youth issues such as early marriage.

Question 9.2

Identify one factor that has contributed to the effectiveness of this initiative.

Key to the success of the programme by Rahnuma is involvement of young people in its design, which gives them ownership, empowerment and motivation. In addition, the engagement of boys and men as partners in addressing sexual and gender-based violence also led to the effective implementation.

Question 9.3

For strengthening CSE implementation in Pakistan, it is critically important to have the following:

1. Strong political will with social and religious patronage for delivery of integrated CSE through schools and at community levels.
2. Institutionalization of CSE implementation and ensuring trained teachers and community-based peer educators on contextualized content.

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