



Monitoring • Mobilising • Advocating

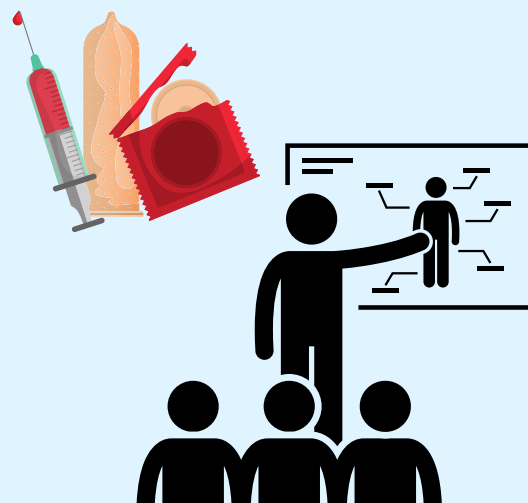
International youth day Community dialogue feedback

Barriers of adolescent access to Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services and Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)

Definitions

Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) A rights-based and gender-focused approach to sexuality education, whether in-school or out-of-school. CSE is curriculum-based education that aims to equip children and young people with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will enable them to develop a positive view of their sexuality, in the context of their emotional and social development (UNESCO, 2018).

Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) --is a state of physical, emotional, mental, and social wellbeing in relation to all aspects of sexuality and reproduction, not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction, or infirmity. Positive SRH recognises pleasurable sexual relationships, trust, communication, promotion of self-esteem and the individual right to make decisions governing their bodies and access to services to support that right. (Guttmacher -Lancet Commission integrated definition of SRHR)



Key points

1. For teenage mothers the public health system is hard to navigate, more support is needed.

2. A major challenge is that the Age of Consent to sexual activity is mainly 16 in many Caribbean countries and does not coincide with the age for access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services. Also, the social stigma with adolescents accessing condoms must also be addressed to prevent the spread of STIs, teenage pregnancy etc.

3. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic there was limited access to SRH services and information, a lot of risky sexual activity were taking place with a widening of the knowledge gap on CSE. There must be a narrowing of the gap of both knowledge and access to SRH services.

Barbados

The Barbados Family Planning Association has developed their own CSE curriculum to include topics that were left out such as infertility and gender inclusive topics.



Guyana

Some teachers are trained to deliver the HFLE program but the curriculum still needs amending. The Guyana Planned Parenthood Association has volunteered and revised some curriculum aspects and taught sessions in schools. There is still the challenge of accessing the vast geography of Guyana and more focus into the hinterland areas which are not accessible to vehicles.



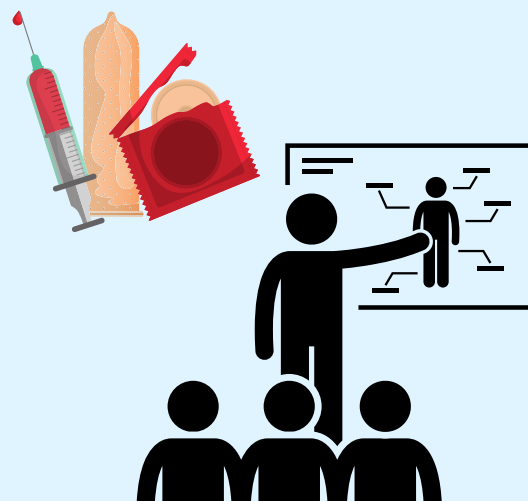


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Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) -- A comprehensive, life skills-based programme, which focuses on the development of the whole person in that it: enhances the potential of young persons to become productive and contributing adults/citizens, promotes an understanding of the principles that underlie personal and social well-being, fosters the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes that make for healthy family life; increases the ability to practice responsible decision-making about social and sexual behaviour; and more.



Key points

4. We need to get to a discussion outside of morality and capitalist notions of productivity and factor in human life and dignity. People are dying and young persons must be able to navigate their sexual lives with agency, knowledge and dexterity to make decisions they have to make because of the societies they live in.

5. Gender Identities, socio-economic status, sexuality, living with disabilities and geographic location severely impact youth access to CSE and SRH services. LGBTQ+ youth are left out of not only CSE but are invisible in society on the whole. Therefore their needs are not at all addressed. Young persons with disabilities, who experience poverty and live in rural areas are at risk.

6. Privilege is a major factor in deciding what information is accessible and this is also a barrier for young people who experience poverty, live in rural areas and whose schools, teachers and parents are not equipped with the knowledge, tools and motivation to share CSE information.

Jamaica

Young people have been creating spaces to learn more about CSE on their own through youth-led organisations such as GirlswhoknowJA where professionals were brought to answer questions posed by youth.

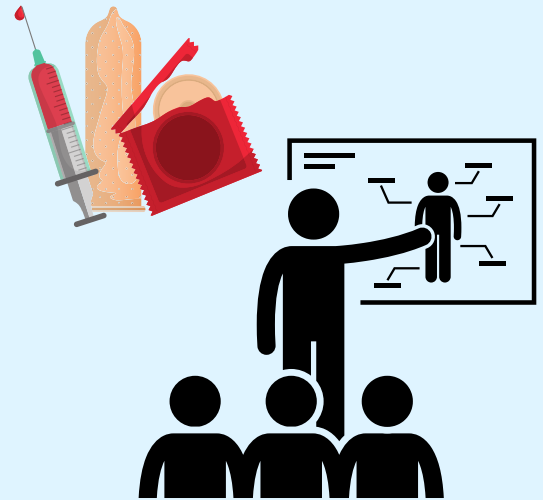


Trinidad and Tobago

The Right Way project by Feminitt Caribbean was a CSE out of school program for children and adolescents, done by the youth-led group in the village of Buenos Ayres. They hosted consultations and a community needs assessment with community members, faith leaders and members of parliament for Point Fortin. They taught sessions on CSE and produced a toolkit and a “train the trainers” manual.



SOLUTIONS



Key points

- 7.** Funding is necessary to create a bigger impact especially for youth led groups who do work with little to no funding
- 8.** Older generations must be educated on gender inclusion, sexuality and the concerns of the youth. This is also a confusing time for older generations to understand gender terms such as heteronormativity, patriarchy, gender identities and new realities. This needs to be shared
- 9.** The HFLE Curriculum needs to be strengthened by time schedules, evaluations and delivery. Teacher education must also include usage of prose, art, and literature done by Caribbean writers that address queer youth, sexuality, Caribbean cultures around sex and adolescents in the CSE lesson plan.
- 10.** While we dismantle some systemic limitations, building spaces outside of the system can be a choice for many organisers to show new possibilities. It is an opportunity to save the lives of young persons by harnessing the role of parents/communities and equipping them with the tools they need for CSE to their children.