

APPRAISAL: SYNTHESIS

Title: Comprehensive Sexuality Education, Trainers' Resource Manual

Type of document: Material for Trainers

Year of publication: 2003

Author/publisher: Action Health Incorporated, Nigeria

Number of pages: 354 pages

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Abstract:

Comprehensive Sexuality Education is not an official document made by the Ministry of Education of Nigeria. It results of the work of Action Health Inc. (AHI), a non-governmental and non-profit organization in Nigeria. It complements an earlier publication, *Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Nigeria*, developed by AHI and a National Task Force composed by 20 governmental and non-governmental agencies. *Comprehensive Sexuality Education* was developed to fulfil needs and concerns of young people, teachers, parents and community in Nigeria. The document is a contribution to the Nigerian government's desire to develop adequate attention and resource to adolescent reproductive health by providing teachers and others interested in the subject, some valuable information. It contains several activities designed to be used by anyone who wants to facilitate participatory learning activities with young people. This manual is a planned process of education that fosters the acquisition of factual information, the formation of positive attitudes, beliefs and values, as well as the developments of skills to cope with the biological, psychological, socio-cultural and spiritual aspects of human sexuality. The overall goal articulated in this manual is to create a positive and comprehensive educational programme that helps students gain knowledge, values and skills to lead sexually healthy and responsible lives. More specifically, the manual is designed to help adolescents: develop self-acceptance

through self-awareness; respect themselves as sexual persons (including their bodies, feelings, attractions); appreciate the differences among individuals; increase comfort and skills in discussing sexuality issues with peers and adults; explore and develop values, attitudes and feelings about their own sexuality; explore and develop values, attitudes and feelings about their own sexuality; increase knowledge and skills for avoiding unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including preventing HIV/AIDS; acquire skills to assist in making positive decisions for themselves, acquire information and skills for taking care of their sexual health; and develop knowledge and skills that will help them maintain caring, supportive, non-coercive, and mutually pleasurable relationships (sexual and non-sexual).

Note:

This comprehensive manual suggests a step-by-step approach to the teaching of the important subject of Sexuality Education. It aims to provide a response to HIV/AIDS as well as promoting positive sexuality. It complements and balances the prevention messages and skills development with message that support the development of a positive sense of self, healthy sexuality and healthy relationships, which will assist youth in Nigeria in growing up. The document can be ordered for free from Action Health Incorporated publications by sending an email to this address: library@actionhealthinc.org

Strengths

1) The document is clear, well structured, up to date, relevant and non-discriminatory. Therefore, the manual obtained high results in this appraisal. The document is very complete and can serve as a good reference, easy readable and accessible even for inexperienced trainers. Indeed, it provides many information, tools and annexes so further reading materials are not necessary. The goal of the material is the outcome of the need to assist parents, teachers, other concerned adults and youth programme

implementers interested, in the task of helping adolescents go through one of the most demanding times of their lives. Its primary goal is to help educators of Nigerian adolescents gain the knowledge and skills needed to express their sexuality in life-enhancing ways.

2) The manual tries to respond appropriately to the challenges and conflicting messages facing young people by providing them honest, open and informed information. It argues that when adolescents have access to facts, they can correct misinformation, challenge myths and clarify their own values. When communication is effective, youth are better able to express themselves and can ask for help when necessary, stand up for their own values, communicate their concerns to their parents and health providers, and be in better control of their lives and health.

3) The document introduces, in one volume, instructional materials for teaching every topics under the six Key Concepts identified in the Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Nigeria (Human Development, Relationships, Personal Skills, Sexual Behavior, Sexual Health, and Society and Culture). Each concept covers several topics, while each topic covers several lessons that will help teachers facilitate learning of the topic. It is divided into 3 parts: 1) Trainers' Guide (which contains Introduction, Adolescent Needs and Development, Guide Notes on the Manual, and Implementations Suggestions); 2) Outline of Study/Instructional Materials (which includes the modules developing the six Key Concepts) and 3) Resource Material. The topics are covered in a logical sequence. They are presented in the light of the need to gradually build up the interest of students in the subject. It starts to introduce subjects through something students are familiar with or curious about, such families, love and dating. Each topic also provides some evaluations in order to measure what has been learned in the lesson.

4) The document contains a rich variety of activities with which to facilitate learning of different kinds of skills and knowledge. At the beginning of each chapter, an instructional material section alerts the teacher to the tasks and materials preparation that should be done in advance of the session. Content is also included to provide background information to the trainer. A procedures section that leads trainers through the session's basic activities, with each step numbered, is also suggested. Finally, the objectives are clearly explained in order to measure outcomes of the lesson. Some additional materials and enrichment activities are also available at the end of the document. The document promotes an interactive way to learn to encourage adolescents to share actively their opinion, experiences, concerns and knowledge.

5) The document provides basic information for protecting sexual health. An entire part is devoted to abstinence and another to contraception. It provides youth with the opportunities to choose responsibly the best manner to protect themselves according to their situation, needs and values. The chapter "Drug Abuse" warns young people against risky behaviors that can occur because of this danger.

6) HIV and AIDS is discussed in the part developing "Sexually Transmitted Infections." The meaning of STIs/HIV/AIDS, the symptoms for the common types of STIs, the effects of STIs/HIV/AIDS, behaviours that place individuals at risk of contracting STIs/HIV/AIDS, the different modes of transmission of STIs and HIV, the way to prevent them, the importance of testing someone for STIs/HIV/AIDS and the places to go for counselling, myth about HIV Infection, and the community care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS, are clearly explained.

7) The manual tries to help learners and young people to resist to all sorts of pressure being more responsible and pleased with who they are. The manual emphasizes on personal skills development and suggests many activities to implement it. Modules 1; 2 and 3, about Relationships, Human Development and Personal Skills introduce chapters about love, friendship, dating, body image; values, self-esteem, goal setting,

assertiveness or decision making, in order to enable youth to practice healthy behaviours that will have positive effects on their lives. Therefore, the manual identifies and promotes factors that improves self-esteem, defines and explain what love is, focus on the importance to care and support those with HIV, suggests ways to protect youth against the possibility of acquaintance or date rape, provides strategies for saying no or how to apply negotiation skills and techniques to various scenarios. Finally, it helps to identify problems/situations that may require help and in which agencies youth can find support and care.

8) A complete chapter is devoted to “Gender Roles”. It states that it is important to fight against pressure to conform to gender-role stereotypes which occurs during adolescences. Indeed, accepting gender role stereotypes can limit a person’s life aspirations, potentials etc. so it is very important to promote equality at an early age. The manual define and explain the terms “Gender” and “Gender Roles”; list the similarities and dissimilarities between “female” and “male”; list several examples of stereotypical gender roles; identify common myths about gender roles; list factors that influence gender roles; discuss the cultural differences in attitudes towards female and male roles in the society; explain the limiting effects of accepting role stereotypes; promotes equality and describe the misconceptions about gender roles in sexuality issues.

9) The document develops an entire chapters on “Sexuality and the Law” in which laws that protect the rights of the Nigerian child are stated. In particular, it explains that the law protects children (and adults) from being forced into any sexual relationship. Another chapter in devoted to “Sexual Abuse” and provides information to avoid coercion, sexual harassmtent or rape. Then, it enumerates what to do in the event of sexual abuse and sources of help for the victims. A chapter called “Assertiveness” also develops the ability skill to respectfully express feelings, opinions and rights for resisting in case of pressure to do something against the will.

10) The document tries to overcome stigma and discrimination by arguing that education must prepare the child to live in a free society, in a spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality among men and women and friendship among all people. It also condemns rejection and promotes care and support for those with HIV. The chapter “Diversity”, defines discrimination and its consequences, and mentions various forms of assistance for victims. It focuses on the importance of recognizing and accepting individual differences.

11) Module 6, called “Sexuality, Society and Culture”, introduces sexuality within the larger Nigerian society. The topic of sexuality in light with law, society, diversity, religion, arts and media in Nigeria, is developed. Indeed, the document is appropriate to the Nigerian society and specificities so trainers may recognize their own culture and values in the manual. Nevertheless, the document condemns taboos or any negative community practices and beliefs regarding sexuality and HIV and AIDS. Therefore, an entire chapter is devoted to abortion which discusses the reasons for abortion, identifies misconception about it, and explains the consequences of unsafe abortion and the need to seek counselling over unwanted pregnancy. It doesn’t promote abortion but just inform youth about it and recall that in Nigeria, abortion is illegal except to save the life of the pregnant woman. Among others, the manual also challenges myth around women circumcision, masculinity and traditional beliefs for HIV & AIDS treatment.

12) The manual presentation is very simple, readable even if the cover is not especially attractive. The paper is in a standard quality so the material can be quite durable and be reproduced economically. The content is well-designed and it generally makes good use of the available space. A clear overview is available at the beginning of the manual in order to facilitate its use.

Weakness / aspects to be improved

1) Information about antiretroviral treatment against HIV/AIDS and its consequences is not discussed in the manual.

Suggestions for improvement

→ The manual could include, in the chapter “Sexually Transmitted Infections”, some basic and up-to-date information on antiretroviral treatment against HIV/AIDS. Indeed, it would be useful to explain what antiretroviral treatment is and what are the results, why and when such a treatment can be taken or its possible consequences on daily life.

2) The manual don't expose and explain the factors making girls and women more vulnerable to HIV and AIDS.

Suggestions for improvement

→ It should be important to introduce HIV and AIDS in a gender perspective and expose that girls and woman are the most vulnerable population because of biological, social, economical and political factors.

3) The material does not include means to assess learners before the programme.

Suggestions for improvement

→ Each chapter provides an evaluation form at the end of the lesson to assess learners after the programmes. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to also add an evaluation at the beginning of each lesson so trainer can compare learners' responses and see if they improve their knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour.

4) More details about approximate time are not available before each activity.

Suggestions for improvement

→ Even if the manual clearly stated in the introductory pages that all lessons can be adapted to a variety of time but are, in general, designed to fit into 30-60 minute class period, it would be easier for trainers to precise the approximate time needed for each activity.

Internal consistency

The first introductory pages provide many information and guidance for the use of the entire manual. The target group of the manual is clear and activities are adapted to adolescents. Both language and images are gender sensitive. The contents of the manual are in line with the learning objectives/outcomes.

Transferability issues and more suggestions for adapting the manual

The manual is a generic manual, although it does make use of names, case studies from Nigeria. The topics addressed are very relevant and can serve as model on how to teach about sexual and reproductive health at schools. It includes a wide range of activities which could be used as examples for teaching sexuality education with youth. Therefore, the manual could be easily adapted for the official curricula of any country or serve as a resource for educators working with in- and out-of-school youth in the field of sexual and reproductive health, learning about sexuality, coping with emotions, parenthood, sexual harassment and so forth. Nevertheless, the last module, which is about Sexuality, Society and Culture, introduces issues related to religion, law, arts, tradition, Medias and values proper to Nigeria context and society. Therefore, this part is not transferable and should be excluded.