

Training course in adolescent sexual and reproductive  
health 2021

Comprehensive sexuality education provision

Aisha Shalash

Institute of Community and Public Health, Birzeit University, Palestine

[aashalash@birzeit.edu](mailto:aashalash@birzeit.edu)

### **Question 1**

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

Young people need comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in order to receive proper information about human rights, gender equality, relationships, reproduction, sexual behaviors and prevention of ill health. This can be provided in a safe setting with age-appropriate materials by trained professionals, instead of from friends and social media.

### **Question 2**

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

One of the biggest operational constraints that Palestine faces in the provision of CSE as teachers are not adequately prepared and supported. In a study done on the social norms and sexual and reproductive health among youth in Palestine, they cited that teachers were one of the main hindrances to providing them with reproductive health education (1).

### **Question 3**

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

Including CSE as part of the physical education course would be a way that it can be incorporated in school curriculum, providing the proper training to teachers. Many students have reported that when the teacher was not shy in sharing information, they learned a lot about puberty and sexuality (1).

### **Question 4**

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

The three strategies used were: a. understanding the local context and using that as the basis for their program design, b. carefully considering which topics can be included and which are considered to be culturally inappropriate and c. engaging parents, community members, religious leaders by reaching out and sensitizing them to the information they will share with their children.

### **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 levels of influence that need to be understood are first the adolescents themselves, then interpersonal (parents, peers), organizational (teachers), community (community and religious leaders), and societal (political and religious leaders).

### **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?**

The gatekeepers were parents and community members.

### **Question 5.3**

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

The main gatekeepers in Palestine would be parents community members and mostly religious leaders. The main religion in the country is Islam and sometimes culture proceeds Islamic teachings (2). If religious leaders are engaged then CSE will be more successful.

### **Question 6**

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

The strategies used to overcome resistance was to build positive public perception of their work with the help of well-known journalists. They used schools to demonstrate the positive impact and took advantage of opportunities such as Ramadan to try and increase community acceptance.

### **Question 7**

**How is CSE different from sexuality education?**

CSE is a newer term than sexuality education. It focuses on sexuality education within a framework of human rights and gender equality. It no longer focuses just on sexual and reproductive health and how to avoid negative sexual health outcomes but using human rights and gender equality.

### **Question 8.1**

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

The considerations suggested are the program follow and coincide with all relevant national policies, guidelines, regulations and laws, to adopt clear goals, concepts and learning objectives

which should be articulated within the contents, and ensure that the curriculum is acceptable, contents are practical and program needs are effective.

### **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?**

They conducted a needs assessment exercise by starting with the biology lesson on reproductive organs and then conducting seminars where students could ask questions and physicians answered them as well as making a book of all the questions that the students had written.

### **Question 8.3**

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

Any question deemed as sensitive was referred to the Youth Health Hotline operated by the Society.

### **Question 9.1**

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

One of the country's initiatives of CSE was done by Save the Children in the Aida Refugee camp in Bethlehem. It mainly focused on sexual and reproductive health rights of adolescents in the camp and how to go about improving gender-based violence. This was done by performing plays involving adolescents and their mothers. They had hoped to expand their sharing of knowledge in other camps (3). It was a 3-year program that did not have the funds for sustainability after the grant was over. (I understand this example is very far-fetched. I couldn't find another example of CSE.)

### **Question 9.2**

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

The involvement of the community in the project could be an effective factor.

### **Question 9.3**

**Identify 2 factors that you believe are critical for strengthening implementation of CSE in your country?**

Two factors that I think are critical in strengthening CSE in Palestine are carefully considering the topics that should be discussed and not considered to be taboos and engaging and sensitizing

gatekeepers (teachers, parents, religions leaders, community members) to help with the resistance that CSE will inevitably face.

## **References**

1. Sharek Youth Forum, UNFPA. Social Norms and Sexual and Reproductive Health Among Youth in Palestine [Internet]. 2020. Available from: [https://palestine.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/social\\_norms\\_and\\_sexual\\_and\\_reproductive\\_health\\_among\\_youth\\_in\\_palestine.pdf](https://palestine.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/social_norms_and_sexual_and_reproductive_health_among_youth_in_palestine.pdf)
2. Ibrahim Banat B, Dayyeh J. Sexual Education of Palestinian University Students: Between Perceptions and Cultural Barriers. *Global Journal of Health Science*. 2019;11(7):112.
3. Promoting Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights in Adolescent Refugees: A Case Study of Save the Children's Work in Aida Refugee Camp, West Bank, Occupied Palestinian Territory [Internet]. Resource Centre. 2021 [cited 27 January 2021]. Available from: [https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/7716/pdf/promoting\\_sexual\\_and\\_reproductive\\_health\\_rights\\_may\\_al-shaghana1.pdf](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/7716/pdf/promoting_sexual_and_reproductive_health_rights_may_al-shaghana1.pdf)