

- The NaCCA is currently using the national guidelines on CSE to inform the curriculum review whilst PPAG's CSE Manual (Know it, Own it, Live it) and the GES Teachers Resource Book are informing the content of the programme.
- Due to the current limited contact hours between teachers and pupils in schools, the CSE programme will be integrated into some existing subjects like Integrated Science and Social Studies, instead of being a stand-alone subject in the curriculum.
- The review and integration process is expected to be completed by the end of 2018.

A call to action while we wait for the national curriculum

During the consultative meetings with the various stakeholders, a number of organizations underscored the need for the actors within the CSE sector to go ahead with the implementation of the national guidelines while awaiting the outcome of the curriculum review process. In particular, the national coordinator of SHEP, Mrs Esi Inkoom called on civil society organizations whose work is focused on youth development to double their efforts at expanding CSE to school youth because the rate of teenage pregnancies at the Junior High School level is reaching alarming proportion. She however, added that it was important for all organizations working in schools to report to SHEP, both at the local and national levels to enable the SHEP secretariat to coordinate and harmonize school health interventions.



A meeting with the SHEP unit of GES

PPAG on the other hand has already taken a step forward to implement the national guidelines in schools, using their evidence informed programme titled "Know it, Own it, Live it". At the consultative meeting with PPAG, their programme manager responsible for youth activities, Mr Selassie Ishmael was already preparing to train teachers on the national guidelines on CSE and called on other NGOs to follow the example and move into action.

The executive director of the NPC, Dr. Leticia Appiah, mentioned that efforts by NGOs and other key stakeholders to support GES adopt and implement CSE for young people in schools have been very laudable and impactful. She however, lamented that little efforts have been channeled to support the National Youth Authority (NYA) to adopt and implement the out-of-school component of the national guidelines on CSE. Accordingly, Dr Appiah encouraged all stakeholders to also channel their efforts to support NYA towards providing CSE for out-of-school youth.

Next line of actions

For the next phase in the process of rolling out the age-appropriate CSE programme,

1. Age-appropriate Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs) would be developed by the technical working group to be used in teaching the CSE programme.
2. The technical working group is planning a pilot study in 2019 in schools in selected regions across the country to generate local or context specific evidence on the programme.
3. An evaluation study would also be conducted to determine the effectiveness of the CSE programme, including cultural acceptability, age

appropriateness, appropriateness of TLMs and teaching methods. This is intended to inform the Ministry of Education on how to successfully implement the age-appropriate CSE programme.

4. Teachers from selected schools for the pilot study will therefore be trained using the new CSE manual to be produced by the consultant as well as the Teachers Resource Book.
5. The Evidence to Action team will work with the Working Group to support the NYA on the implementation of the out-of-school component of the national guidelines since the available information show that efforts so far have mainly been tailored towards the in-school programme.
6. Again the Evidence to Action team will continue to monitor the developments at NaCCA regarding the integration of the national guidelines into the basic and high school curriculum and will provide an update in the next quarterly report.
7. The YHFG has been co-opted into the Working Group on CSE and this would enable it to channel the Evidence to Action project resources to support the activities of the WG. The YHFG's membership of the working group will also make it easier to compile the quarterly updates to keep all stakeholders informed at all times.

Recommendations

1. There is the need for the technical working group to sensitize traditional authorities, opinion leaders and education directors especially in regions where pilot studies will be conducted. This is to create an awareness and support for the national age-appropriate CSE programme before its roll out.
2. In addition to the pilot study to be conducted in 2019, a baseline research to explore the determinants and behavioural factors influencing teachers and education directors' decisions regarding adoption and implementation of CSE should also be given a consideration by the working group.
3. Finally, the technical working group should also consider seeking champions within the education sector, whose role will help in the successful implementation of the guidelines.

Good to know!

- Menstrual Hygiene Management tool-kit developed by UNICEF Ghana for teaching both girls and boys on how to practice good menstrual hygiene: <http://menstrualhygienegh.org/index.php>
- With the support of UNICEF Ghana, the Girls Education Unit of the GES has developed guidelines on integrating adolescent mothers back to schools.
- <https://safe2choose.org/>

Acknowledgement

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Policy update

Ghana's road to implementing Age-appropriate Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Basic and High schools



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**Youth Harvest Foundation Ghana
(YHFG)**

Introduction

This policy update presents the status of Ghana's efforts at implementing age-appropriate Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in basic and high schools. It is part of the Youth Harvest Foundation Ghana's contribution to the national efforts at expanding young peoples' access to CSE. This is intended to enable them make informed choices regarding their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). This is the first edition of the updates on CSE and it is planned to be produced on quarterly basis. The policy updates is part of the YHFG's Evidence to Action project, which is aimed at generating the necessary evidence to support the implementation of, age appropriate CSE in Ghana. The project was developed in response to the national guidelines on CSE and the quarterly updates are aimed at putting all stakeholders working with, and for young people up to speed on the implementation of the guidelines. It is expected that these updates will help all actors in the sexual and reproductive health education sector to work in synchrony with the national guidelines and avoid duplication of efforts.

This very first update is based on an extensive consultation with the key stakeholders in the sector, including the Ghana Education Services (GES), National Population Council (NPC), National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA), UNESCO Ghana, UNFPA Ghana, PPAG, Marie Stopes Ghana, UNICEF Ghana, School Health Education Programme (SHEP) and the Adolescent Health Research Group of the Department of Population and Health at the University of Cape Coast. The aim of the consultations was to seek the support of these critical groups for the Evidence to Action Project and also to confirm the status of the implementation of the national guidelines on CSE.

Overview of young peoples' access to CSE in Ghana

Ghana's youthful population is sexually active, yet there is still an unmet need for CSE by both in- and out-of-school youth. The right to CSE, much like the right to education in general, is a fundamental right of all young people as guaranteed by the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana. Despite the constitutional guarantee, there is currently no formal CSE programme for providing sexuality education for young people in or out of school. The low access of young people to age-appropriate CSE exposes them to reproductive health vulnerabilities particularly unplanned pregnancies and increased risk of STIs. It was therefore not a surprise that in 2014, 14% of women aged 15-19 years had begun childbearing. Births to girls under 15 years old pose especially high health risks for mother and child. Some pregnant adolescents choose abortion, and where access to abortion is legally or logistically restricted as it is in Ghana, most abortions are unsafe. Timely provision of CSE provides structured opportunities for adolescents to gain knowledge and skills to explore their attitudes and values, and to make decisions and pursue life skills necessary for making healthy informed choices about their sexual lives and avoid adverse health outcomes.

The National guidelines on CSE: the development process

Over the years, national efforts at putting CSE in the school curriculum have been led by different actors at different time points. But it was not until in 2014 when some selected key stakeholders, including the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG), UNFPA Ghana, UNICEF Ghana, Ghana Education Service (GES), Marie Stopes International Ghana and under the leadership of the National Population Council (NPC) came together to contract consultants

to work on a national guidelines. The Department of Population and Health, University of Cape Coast, under the leadership of Prof. Awusabo-Asare was consulted to lead this process in early 2017. Prior to being contracted to lead the development of the national guidelines on CSE, the consultants had published a report on how the policies related to sexuality education in Ghana were translated into practice and what students, teachers and heads of schools thought about them. Their report provided the Government of Ghana and other stakeholders with a better understanding of the status of implementation of sexuality education in secondary schools. The report also informed the development of the national guidelines on CSE. The consultants then proposed a national guidelines that will integrate gender, human values, and sexual and reproductive health and rights perspectives into sexuality education in Ghana. The proposal was based on the informed position that at this stage of their development, CSE for young people should cover a broad range of issues relating to their physical, biological, emotional and social development, as well as on skills development in areas such as positive decision-making, self-esteem and the building of healthy relationships. The aim was for reproductive health and rights education to be delivered with confidence and empathy, and to contribute to the healthy development of positive attitudes, values and skills that young people need now and in the future. These observations have informed the selection of topics for the guidelines. The consultants produced a first draft of the guidelines and made a presentation to stakeholders where they received inputs and suggestions for improvement. Eventually, a final version of the guidelines was published in late 2017. Copies of the national guidelines can be obtained from the National Population Council in Accra.

The guidelines consist of nine modules with 60 topics. The modular approach was guided by aspects of the principles of curriculum development, namely appropriateness for a particular age and setting, matching of topics and logical grouping of issues. They took into consideration the concepts of sequencing (each successive experience building upon preceding issues with the intention of deepening knowledge and skills) and continuity (vertical manipulation/ repetition of components). Based on the modules and the sub-topics, the guidelines have been set out separately for in-school and out-of-school young people.



Objectives of the guidelines

The age-appropriate CSE is expected to help young people in the following ways:

1. Acquire accurate and reliable information on sexual and reproductive health and rights.
2. Develop critical thinking, communication and negotiation, self-development and decision-making, confidence and assertive skills.
3. Nurture positive attitudes and values, respect for self and others, as well



as nurture positive self-worth, sense of responsibility and positive attitude toward their sexual and reproductive health.

YHFG's efforts to support the implementation of the national age-appropriate CSE guidelines

Since its inception in 2002, the Youth Harvest Foundation Ghana (YHFG) has been implementing CSE programmes to respond to the SRHR needs of young people in Northern Ghana. Following the development of the national age-appropriate CSE guidelines and with support from RFSU (Sweden), the YHFG is contributing to the implementation of the guidelines through a project titled "Evidence to Action: Sexual Health Education Advocacy Project". The aim of the project is to generate the necessary evidence to support GES/MoE in the adoption and implementation of the age-appropriate CSE guidelines in basic and junior high schools.

Recognising the key contributions and expertise of other like-minded CSOs and governmental agencies in CSE, YHFG as part of its initial activities under the "Evidence to Action" project, conducted a national consultation of key stakeholders to seek their support and also to ascertain the status of the national guidelines.

Status of the implementation of the National Guidelines on age-appropriate CSE

The consultation with the various key stakeholders on CSE was very productive and all the organizations consulted were open to share information and to advice on how all actors could work together to ensure a successful implementation of the national guidelines. Based on the information provided by the stakeholders, the status of the implementation of the national guidelines on CSE is as follows:

- There is a high national level interest by CSOs and the relevant government agencies in support of a national roll-out of the CSE in schools.
- After the development of the guidelines, the NPC and its development partners have presented it to the Ministry of Education.
- A technical Working Group (WG) on the implementation of the national guidelines has been formed. The WG is led by the SHEP national secretariat and includes UNFPA Ghana, PPAG, Ipas, Marie Stopes Ghana, UNESCO, SHEP and the NPC. The WG meets on regular basis to discuss updates and to decide on the next line of actions regarding the full adoption and implementation of the guidelines.
- Through advocacy engagements by the technical working group, the Minister of Education indicated that the ministry would study the guidelines and consider its recommendations as part of the on-going curriculum review process.
- The Minister of Education has also directed the harmonization of the two CSE manuals, the Know It, Own It, Live It and the ARH source book into smaller Teaching and Learning Materials and Readers to aid their easy use by both facilitators and students. To this end, a consultant has been contracted to harmonize the existing CSE manuals in accordance with the national guidelines.
- Currently, the Ghana Education Service (GES) is carrying out a National curriculum review for basic and high schools and the Minister of Education has tasked the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA) to work towards integrating the CSE guidelines into the basic school curriculum as part of the on-going review.