“Youth participation & leadership must be the rule, not the exception”

Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin
UNFPA Executive Director

Investing in Young People: The Time is Now!

Delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person’s potential is fulfilled

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Youth pregnancy is a concern

Teenage pregnancy is a concern programme supports; Specifically the programme aims to programmes including HIV prevention. The Adolescent Sexual & Reproductive

education by providing scientifically accurate, realistic, non-judgmental information. Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) is aimed at: a) Supporting young people to become equipped with the knowledge, skills and values to make responsible decisions about their sexual and social relationships. b) Providing opportunities to explore own values and attitudes and to build decision making, communica- tion and risk reduction skills about many aspects of sexuality. c) Promoting and sustaining healthy behav- iors, including: demand creation and links to youth friendly health ser- vices.

Findings of the review of school curricula used to deliver CSE a) Curricula and framework are strong, address what it means to grow in a high HIV prevalence setting. b) CSE curricula outlines outcomes and indicators on gender equality, hu- man rights, vulnerability reduction and HIV treatment. The outcomes are missing in the story curriculum. c) CSE course is not strong on communication and making and essential topics for risk reduction such as puberty, sex, sexual and reproductive health and contraception are not presented or addressed adequately. d) Primary school framework is not age appropriate. It has a wide age range, from 6-13 years and does not specify which topics to be addressed at which age.

Common myths about CSE

MYTH: CSE encourages young people to have sex. FACT: Research showed that sexuality education can help young people delay their first sexual experience, and increase the likelihood of HIV or pregnancy prevention. It builds communication skills making it easier for young people to decide when and with whom to have sex, or so they do if they want to.

MYTH: CSE should not be taught to young people, especially when they are exposed to the mechanism of sex. FACT: CSE is designed to be age-appropriate, ensuring topics are tailored for varied age groups. The subjects will vary depending on age and grade – but builds on their knowledge as they grow and mature.

MYTH: CSE should be the responsibility of parents and families. FACT: a) Parents and families are an important source of information for young people. However schools have an essential role in delivering structured education that focuses on objective scientific information, and the development of skills. It is best delivered by trained teachers.

MYTH: Comprehensive sexuality education goes against our culture or religion. FACT: Comprehensive sexuality education should be adapted to the culture and realities of every country, including the realities of young peoples lives. It goes: young people the opportunity to reflect on any harmful social norms that may impact on their lives, such as gender inequality.

Youth friendly services provide quality, integrated HIV & SRH services related services to adolescents and young people in a friendly, non-judgemental environment manner. Younger sexual and reproductive health services should be accessible, acceptable, appropriate, effective and affordable.

WHO global standards for quality health services for adolescents

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Findings from the review of 16 YFS in Botswana

a) Botswana does not have standalone YFS standards aligned to WHO global standards. b) At the same time the YFS were not fully aligned to WHO global standards.

Coverage of YFS

In 2015, UNFPA established a 22 member Youth Advisory Panel (YAP). The panel is a springboard that guides UNFPA programme development and implementation. The YAP is a demonstration of UNFPA’s commitment to young people’s empowerment to participate in the development of their communities. The panel members are from 14 to 24 years and were nominated by their schools and NGOs.

"Young people should be at the forefront of global change and innovation. They are an enormous source of energy, talent, and know-how. They can be key agents for development and peace."

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