



Improving Youth Education and Services

Practices

- Support curriculum-based sex and HIV/AIDS education programs for youth.
- Promote reproductive health and HIV services for youth in clinical settings, and include community outreach.
- Ensure effective youth participation in planning and implementing programs and services.
- Support mass media interventions targeting youth with positive and educational messages about reproductive health and HIV/AIDS.
- Collaborate with faith-based organizations in youth-focused campaigns.
- Promote peer education projects that emphasize adult involvement.

Summary: Young people are a critically important population group to address when considering education and services for better reproductive health options. Youth are at significant risk of unintended pregnancy and exposure to sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Inside or outside of marriage, more than half of young women in sub-Saharan Africa and a third in Latin America and the Caribbean deliver their first child before age 20. Every day, 5,000 young people ages 15 to 24 become infected with HIV, representing almost two million new infections each year. Strategies to improve reproductive health and family planning services for young people can address these growing problems and improve their sexual and reproductive health. These supportive strategies should also segment educational activities to the appropriate age group, ensure that program activities address desired outcomes, reduce gender inequities, and reinforce protective factors such as parental involvement and education.

Support curriculum-based sex and HIV/AIDS education programs for youth.

Sex and HIV education programs for youth that are based on a written curriculum and are implemented in school, clinic, or community settings are a promising type of intervention for reducing adolescent sexual-risk behaviors. These programs can delay the initiation of sex, reduce the frequency of sex and number of sexual partners, and increase condom and contraceptive use.¹

Suggested Resources:

Standards for Curriculum-Based Reproductive Health and HIV Education Programs. FHI/YouthNet, 2006. <http://www.fhi.org/NR/rdonlyres/ea6ev5yigicx-2nukyntbvjuj35yk55wi5lwnnwkgko3touyyp3a33aiczu-toyb6zhxcnwiyoc37uxyng/sexedstandards.pdf>

My Changing Body: Fertility Awareness for Youth. Institute for Reproductive Health of Georgetown University, FHI, 2003. <http://www.fhi.org/NR/rdonlyres/eqpubqjjh7yz7ud6evjq6bwiz6zkcjkhkwc52yx24yqzftjifcks-fcicsagvutudk2veujquyiuotpa/Fertilityawareness.pdf>

Promote reproductive health and HIV services for youth in clinical settings, and include community outreach.

There is a dire lack of gender-sensitive, youth-friendly reproductive health services.

Community outreach can also play an important role in ensuring reduced social barriers and improved access to services. A need exists for integrating reproductive health and HIV education and services for youth within existing youth services for voluntary counseling and testing, prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission, and postabortion care.²

Suggested Resources:

HIV Counseling and Testing for Youth. FHI/YouthNet, 2007. <http://www.infoforhealth.org/youthwg/PDFs/TrainingMaterials/YouthVCTmanual.pdf>

Meeting the Needs of Young Clients: A Guide to Providing Reproductive Health Services to Adolescents. FHI, 2000. <http://www.fhi.org/en/RH/Pubs/servdelivery/adolguide/index.htm>

The Reproductive Health of Young Adults (module). FHI, 2003. <http://www.fhi.org/en/Youth/YouthNet/rhtrainmat/Reprohealthyyoungadults.htm>

Ensure effective youth participation in planning and implementing programs and services.

Youth participation in programs geared to meet their needs not only respects young people's rights but also leads to better program outcomes. However, involving youth in meaningful activities can be challenging. Organizations

FHI can provide technical assistance and material resources to programs wishing to implement, improve upon, or expand youth-friendly reproductive health services.

must plan for, support, implement, monitor, and evaluate youth involvement efforts.

Suggested Resource:

The Youth Participation Guide. FHI/YouthNet, 2005. <http://www.fhi.org/en/Youth/YouthNet/rhtrainmat/yguide.htm>

Support mass media interventions targeting youth with positive and educational messages about reproductive health and HIV/AIDS.

Mass media interventions that involve more than one type of media, such as the 2002 MTV “Staying Alive Campaign”—delivered through radio, television, and other media—can improve social norms that positively affect youth sexual behavior.³

Collaborate with faith-based organizations in youth-focused campaigns.

Experience shows that many faith-based organizations are willing to address sexuality and reproductive health/HIV issues among youth when they participate in youth-led participatory assessments, capacity-building activities, and information sessions.

Suggested Resource:

Faith-Based Family Life Education (FLE) Curricula. FHI/YouthNet, 2006–2007. Christian and Muslim versions. <http://www.fhi.org/en/Youth/YouthNet/Publications/FLE/index.htm>

Promote peer education projects that emphasize adult involvement.

Peer education programs should recognize the critical and positive role of adult participation in youth-oriented programs. Peer education projects are most successful when they include a focus on youth-adult partnerships, gender, and stakeholder and parental involvement.⁴

Suggested Resource:

Peer Education Toolkit. UNFPA, FHI/YouthNet, 2005–2006. <http://www.fhi.org/en/Youth/YouthNet/Publications/peeredtoolkit/index.htm>

Additional Resources

Interagency Youth Working Group (Web site). <http://www.youthwg.org>

Preventing HIV/AIDS in Young People: A Systematic Review of the Evidence from Developing Countries. WHO, 2006. http://whqlibdoc.who.int/trs/WHO_TRS_938_eng.pdf

References

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- 2 Reynolds HW, Cuthbertson C, Geary C, et al. *An Assessment of Services for Adolescents in Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission Programs.* Youth Research Working Paper No. 4. Research Triangle Park, NC: Family Health International/YouthNet, 2006.
- 3 Geary CW, Mahler H, Finger W, et al. *Using Global Media to Reach Youth: The 2002 MTV Staying Alive Campaign.* Youth Issues Paper 5. Arlington, VA: Family Health International/YouthNet, 2005.
- 4 Svenson G, Burke H. *Formative Research on Youth Peer Education Program Productivity and Sustainability.* Youth Research Working Paper No. 3. Research Triangle Park, NC: Family Health International/YouthNet, 2005.



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