

AmplifyChange is improving sexual health of young people and girls, including comprehensive sexuality education

Young people are the fastest-growing population group in the Global South and make up over 50% of the population in some developing countries. This generation will need to navigate major health and rights challenges as they discover their sexuality - including a persistent HIV epidemic, widespread sexually transmitted infections, unintended pregnancies and gender-based violence. Yet their voices and concerns relating to sexual and reproductive health and education are often overlooked or purposefully neglected. Their experiences and priorities are often downgraded by policy makers, community leaders and key service providers. Young people also face major cultural resistance that limits their access to sexual health education. Consequently, young people often receive fragmented information on their sexual health, which is often incorrect and reinforces stigma, discrimination and confusion.

Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) provides critical knowledge and skills to help prepare young people for a safe and fulfilling transition to adulthood. Despite strong evidence to support the benefits of structured, curriculum-based CSE, few children and young people enjoy genuinely comprehensive sexuality education. Sexuality education is restricted by governments in almost all countries in the Global South. In many countries it is completely absent from the national curriculum. Where it does exist, delivery is hampered by widespread quality issues.

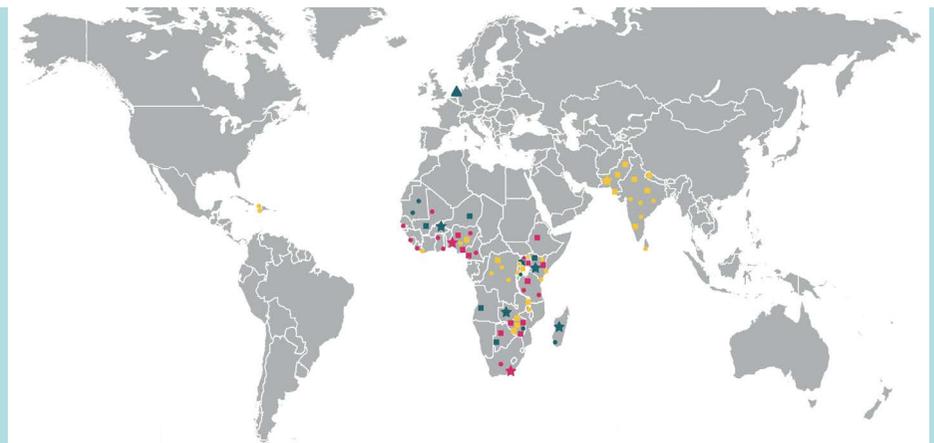
In a fast-changing environment where young people have access to a variety of different communication mediums and school-based sexual health education is absent or failing, young people are sourcing information and perspectives from a wide range of areas, from peer to social media to pornography and much in-between. The choices and behaviours young people make - or that are made for them - are profoundly important in determining health outcomes and achieving poverty reduction for them across their lifespan and for subsequent generations.

AmplifyChange supports projects that aim to increase young people's access to comprehensive sexuality information and education, sexual and reproductive health services and menstrual hygiene management. Our grants support activists working to strengthen legal and policy frameworks to improve young people's access to comprehensive sexuality education, preferably incorporating curricula to address harmful social norms, gender inequality and boost awareness amongst young people of their rights. We support rights-based approaches to young people's SRHR and institutionalise positive approaches to youth sexuality.

AmplifyChange is supporting 107 grants working on comprehensive sexuality education

The grants are supported by a total funding of 8,380,972EUR across the different AmplifyChange grant types. Most of our grant-making on CSE is in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Francophone, Lusophone and Anglophone countries. 14% of the CSE portfolio is based in South Asia, alongside 3 grants in Haiti and 1 grant in the West Bank

Many of the projects address cross-cutting issues that influence CSE access and effectiveness. These include Gender Based Violence, or LGBTI rights amongst young people. Across our CSE portfolio, nearly half of our projects are working with young people to increase their awareness and access to SRHR education and services.



Lessons learned: challenges and successes

Challenges

- National policies and curricula fail to include key components of comprehensive sexuality education. Many states actively limit the provision of open, accurate information on safe sex to young people in schools. National curricula that do address key components rarely include information on sexual orientation or gender identity and access to safe abortion
- Teacher training is weak and unsystematic. Where it is taking place, teacher training does not include values clarification or efforts to address stigma carried by teachers themselves towards young people's sexuality
- Approaches to CSE and how it is delivered: CSE delivery and advocacy efforts have had a strong focus on teacher trainings and in-school delivery
- Budget allocation: As a result of limited political prioritisation or stigmatised discourse public spending has rarely prioritised CSE or sexual health services for young people
- Government bureaucracy and decentralisation - heavy regulation and administrative delays on CSE curriculum development, sign off and delivery in and outside of schools. The decentralisation of local governments can cause varied fiscal commitment and delivery of CSE programmes within countries
- Prejudices and discriminatory social norms require frequent and long-term engagement to enact change. For example, engaging local council leaders on approving CSE within the local school settings may first require challenging their views on sexuality, and wider systematic discriminatory views on the role of young people, consent and autonomy
- Parent-child communication on sex tends to be limited in the conservative settings where many of our grantees operate. Where sex-education takes place it can be marked by myths and misconceptions as well as reproducing restrictive and gendered norms around sexuality. Fathers are often absent from parent-child conversations about sexuality
- Political nature of adolescent sexuality: which is heavily stigmatised and used frequently as a political pawn. This underpins the failure of national policies and curricula to establish comprehensive sexuality education. The politicisation of adolescent sexuality affects decisions at all levels of government and society

Successful strategies

1. **It is important to include and integrate young people from the beginning in discussions, advocacy and development of CSE programmes.** AmplifyChange grantees have demonstrated that programmes that empower young people to be part of the CSE development and delivery can be crucial in its longer-term success and promotion
2. **Grantees have demonstrated that engagement and partnering with local and national government on CSE curriculum development can lead to successful buy in from ministries**



SEED in Madagascar have been working in direct partnership with the Ministry of Education to develop a CSE curriculum to be piloted and tested over 2018 with over 20 partners across Madagascar.



3. **Resources that are used for teaching training and for delivering CSE work best if specific to the context they are being delivered in.** CSE resources also need to be visually and textually relevant to young people
4. **Integrating both male and female parents in conversations on CSE** can help break down concerns and reservations they may have on teaching young people about their sexual health. Providing parents with up-to-date facts about sexual and reproductive health and encouraging ways to communicate can help equip them to discuss healthy sexuality messages with young people
5. **CSE can be delivered in a variety of ways, and by a range of different actors.** Sole focus on ‘traditional’ pedagogy and delivery methods, can sometimes hamper innovative and creative approaches to delivery

Rugby Tackling Life is a very small NGO working in Uganda. Whilst encouraging and training young girls and adolescents to play and be involved in competitive rugby, they also provide sexuality education on the side of the pitch either before or after rugby training. Uganda has withdrawn CSE within schools, grantees have therefore had to think creatively about how to reach young people with sexuality education. As part of their milestones, we agreed that they would blog about their progress. More information and photographs can be found on their [website](#).



Rugby Tackling Life

Opportunity



Uganda



Projet Jeune Leader

Strengthening



Madagascar

6. **Peer education** can play an important role in reaching young people in CSE programmes but peer education projects need to be designed with care and many of their impacts are likely to be in long-term. Peer educator models have proven to be effective in offering peer educators opportunities to progress their own learning and skills, as well as delivering lessons and trainings to young people. This contribution to the human resource pool to deliver sexuality education also develops future opinion leaders to address social norms

Projet Jeune leader have developed a successful peer educator model, and have maintained high-levels of retention of peer educators. This is mainly due to their integrated life skills model where they train young people to be full time educators, counsellors and mentors, whilst also providing life skills training such as attending conferences in the capital city, and professional training. Peer educators are not volunteers, but are paid legal minimum wage for a 35h week, including 2 months of training. Maintaining their peer educations has played a crucial role in delivering consistent SRH education within schools- peer educators are assigned a school in pairs for a year, allowing them to develop trust and confidence of the young people they are engaging with. Programme evaluations have shown that this approach improves knowledge, as well as leads to more positive and gender-equitable attitudes of SRH among young adolescents in Madagascar. They have some excellent quotes, photos and statistics which can be found in their most recent [annual report](#).

How we are learning as Fund

- **Mentorship:** Closely cooperating with grantees throughout the grant set up and implementation periods
- **Digital communities:** Grantees working with CSE have demonstrated a keen interest in connecting with others who are working on the topic. In response, a WhatsApp group connecting groups across both East and West Africa has been set up that will provide a space for learnings to be shared, share documents and articles, discuss advocacy initiatives and success stories. This group will be used to identify best practice, support its rapid dissemination and reflection by a group of grantee-peers and will be documented by AmplifyChange for wider dissemination
- **Cross-consortium knowledge sharing:** A working group has been also established across the AmplifyChange consortium partners that provides a platform for sharing ideas and expertise on improving sexual health of young people and girls, including comprehensive sexuality education

More information

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- [International technical guidance on sexuality education - UNESCO](#)
 - [International comprehensive sexuality education, teens - Guttmacher Institute](#)
 - [Everyone's right to know: delivering comprehensive sexuality education for all young people - IPPF](#)
 - [UNESCO and UNFPA, 2012. A ten-country review of school curricula in East and Southern Africa, Johannesburg - UNESCO](#)
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Going forward we will

- **Linking and learning:** Create opportunities for grantees to connect, share and learn from each other through diverse platforms, including through digital communities
- **User centred design:** Capture learning in grantee-centred technical guidance and organisational development resources designed in conjunction with users: our grantees
- **Amplify Southern voices:** Provide opportunities for grantees to boost their profile internationally and contribute thought leadership on CSE
- **Fund the hard places, not just windows of opportunity or easiest environments to work in:** Continue to support initiatives where they are the most needed, including in challenging contexts where SRHR is weakest or civil society movements are least developed
- **Long-term, results-based financing:** Provide renewal funding to support existing successful grantees to build on and further develop their initial projects

AmplifyChange social media:

