SHINING THROUGH
For the youth of Cagayan de Oro, Philippines, SHINE has brought bright days ahead. A unique project initiated by CARE-Philippines, SHINE stands for Sexual Health Initiatives through Networking and Education. Story on page 12.

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ADVOCACY AND IEC STRATEGIES
Getting the most from the experience of others in promoting adolescent reproductive and sexual health

Valuable lessons can be learned from the experiences of countries in planning and implementing adolescent reproductive and sexual health. With this in mind, the UNESCO Regional Clearing House on Population Education and Communication has commissioned a series of case studies on the subject, with emphasis placed on advocacy and IEC (information, education and communication).

The case studies will document the experiences of Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. They will clearly spell out distinct differences between advocacy and IEC.

Advocacy activities include programmes to gain the support of lawmakers and policymakers, the mass media and other influential groups. IEC activities, on the other hand, reach out to the youth, counsellors, teachers and trainers, extension workers and motivators, and health personnel. A common IEC goal is to change the knowledge, attitude and behaviour of the target groups and to convince them to promote favourable reproductive and sexual health practices.

Advocacy and IEC also differ in strategies. Political lobbying, high level meetings, seminars for journalists, mass media campaigns, and advocacy skills training are typical advocacy strategies.

IEC strategies, on the other hand, include seminars/workshops, peer and individual counselling, in-school and out-of-school education, research, NGO involvement in community activities, ensuring the availability of and access to reproductive health services, and innovative activities such as hotlines, youth camps, dramas, TV shows, or a combination thereof.

Profiling adolescents, the case studies will look into demographic and fertility trends, sexual behaviour patterns, the incidence of STDs, contraception, teenage pregnancies, and so on.

The case studies will examine national policies, programme responses and strategies, factors that have contributed to best practices, and innovative approaches to advocacy and IEC. Their respective impact on the target groups will be evaluated. Organisations which have successfully carried out programmes/activities on adolescent reproductive and sexual health will be identified.
Unesco PROAP sponsors inter-country training

Consolidating and repackaging population information

A two-week inter-country training course, organised by UNESCO/PROAP in collaboration with the UNFPA Country Support Team for East and South-East Asia, enabled participants from 18 countries in Asia and the Pacific to upgrade their (i) knowledge of the theories, principles and strategies of information repackaging and its application; (ii) skills in using PowerPoint, Harvard Graphics and other software and in preparing newsletters, fact sheets, policy briefs, and advocacy materials; and (iii) ability to evaluate the relevance, usefulness, and reliability of sources and resources, to interpret data and research findings and to simplify technical data and language.

The participants’ outputs included PowerPoint presentations on communication and advocacy strategies for adolescent reproductive and sexual health and other relevant topics; booklets and fact sheets on relevant topics; policy papers and kits on the status of population education and population programmes; and other materials.

The participants included programme officers, information specialists, documentalists and educators who work with governments, NGOs and universities in implementing UNFPA-funded population and reproductive health programmes. Assisting them were Ms. Carmelita L. Villanueva, Chief of PROAP Information Programme and Services, and the Regional Clearing House staff. Six advisers from the UNFPA Country Support Team served as resource persons.

Before population statistics, research findings and data can be consolidated and repackaged, they must first be critically selected, processed and analysed. This will ensure the usefulness of the resulting repackaged products in the design, review and implementation of national population policies, plans, programmes and activities.

Unesco PROAP sponsors inter-country training

Consolidating and repackaging population information
The expansion of brain power through the Internet revolution has brought at everybody’s fingertips a wealth of options and solutions for solving the world’s problems.

Mr. Richard Engelhardt, Director a.i. of UNESCO, made the statement in his opening remarks at a two-week inter-country training course on Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for Population and Reproductive Health. Mr. Engelhardt further stressed the power of ICTs to bridge the gap between urban and rural populations and the rich and the poor.

The course, held by UNESCO PROAP in collaboration with UNFPA on 21 June to 2 July 1999, was attended by 16 participants from Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

Ms. Carmelita Villanueva, Chief of PROAP Information Programme and Services, called the participants’ attention to the unparalleled opportunities created by ICTs to promote reproductive health and to resolve population issues. She encouraged them to fully exploit the ICT capabilities that are available in their home countries and thus benefit from their use.

Ms. Villanueva noted that in many countries, the information infrastructure of reproductive health and population programmes have been revolutionised through the establishment of information networks, access to e-mail and the Internet, and use of electronic CD ROM.

The course exposed the participants to new tools and techniques for disseminating information through digitised and electronic methods, the CD ROM and websites in the World Wide Web. The participants are expected to mount their ready-made sites on their return to their countries.
The Minister of Health of Fiji inaugurated the country’s first Adolescent Health Centre in the presence of UNFPA and WHO representatives in the South Pacific, namely Mr. Jose Ferraris and Dr. Shichuo Li.

Operating from the Reproductive Health Clinic, the Centre provides adolescent health programme and services, including counselling and family planning and STI services. Later, the Centre plans to incorporate programmes to promote mental health and to address the problem of alcohol and substance use. The Centre is staffed by well-trained peer educators and supported by a medical doctor and two nurses. Support is also provided by UNFPA through the provision of clinic equipment and staff training.

Since its registration in 1987 as an NGO, the Thoughtshop Foundation has been spearheading a variety of public service activities, particularly sexual health programmes. Simply put, the Thoughtshop Foundation sells ideas and develops projects for organisations.

For the two co-founders, former advertising executives, Mira Kakkar and Mritunjoy Chatterjee, “social communication has always been a passion”. The Foundation, they recall, was born out of a successful anti-drug campaign that they had organised.

Using the communication skills of its team members to advantage, the Thoughtshop Foundation does most of the groundwork in formulating projects and works out schemes to reach target groups. As required, it seeks expert assistance from psychiatrists, sociologists, anthropologists, counsellors and social workers.

Profiles of recent Thoughtshop projects show an enviable track record for the Foundation.
Champa: Reproductive Health Teaching Aids Kit for Adolescent Girls

Developed by the Thoughtshop Foundation in 1996-1997 in collaboration with the Child In Need Institute in West Bengal, this teaching aids kit is meant to help health workers in generating awareness of reproductive health issues among out-of-school rural adolescent girls and women. The kit is available in three languages – Bengali, Hindi and English. It has been adapted for CARE-India’s adolescent reproductive health projects in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

In five modules, the kit visualises the story of a 12-year old girl named Champa. Each module consists of a flip chart with accompanying visual aids/activities. The modules are as follows: (i) Introduction – Ice-breaking – Self-esteem – Puberty; (ii) Menstruation; (iii) Conception – Sex Determination – Gender Issues; (iv) Family Spacing – Why?; and (v) Family Spacing – How?

The five flip charts of the Champa teaching aids kit deal with issues of self-esteem, puberty, menstruation, conception, sex determination, gender issues, contraception – why, and contraception – how.

Needs Assessment Report for a Young People’s Sexual Health Project in West Bengal

In collaboration with AIMS Research in Calcutta and with funding support from the West Bengal Sexual Health Project/Department for International Development, UK, the Thoughtshop Foundation conducted a study of the sexual health problems and information needs of young people in urban and rural West Bengal. The study was conducted in March-April 1997, targeting both male and female adolescents in the age group 12-19, in-school or out-of-school.

The study involved a content analysis of letters received by the ASK column; focus group discussions; interviews with key personalities who exert major influence on young people; and an institutional analysis of sexual health services available to the target population.

The study’s findings point to an almost total lack of awareness of sexual health issues and knowledge of the human anatomy among the target population and the people who influence them most (e.g. parents and teachers). Very often the very same people discourage young people’s access to information about sexual health.

While the institutional analysis indicates some progress in the provision of sexual health services to young people (e.g. awareness programmes, counselling and condom promotion), access to reliable sources of information, including the mass media, is not available to many of them.
Shankar: Reproductive Health Teaching Aids Kit for Adolescent Boys

Currently being developed by the Thoughtshop Foundation in collaboration with the Child In Need Institute in West Bengal, this kit is intended to help peer educators in generating awareness about reproductive health issues among rural adolescent boys and men through discussions and other activities. Its central theme is men’s responsibility for their sexual behaviour and the reproductive and sexual health of their partners.

In five modules, the kit tells the story of Shankar, a 13-year old boy. Each module consists of a flip chart and accompanying visual aids/activities. The modules are as follows: (i) Puberty, self-esteem, responsibility; (ii) Knowledge of changes that girls experience during puberty; (iii) Childbirth; (iv) Contraception – why/how; (v) Safer sex, hygiene, STD/HIV/AIDS.

ASK Booklet for Young People

This 44-page booklet is a compilation of all 21 issues of ASK (AIDS, Sex, Knowledge), an interactive HIV/AIDS and sexual health awareness column produced by the Thoughtshop Foundation for young people. Published every third Thursday of the month in the Voices section of The Statesman newspaper, the ASK column was launched on 23 March 1995 and was published until 6 June 1996.

Readers responded to the column enthusiastically. Some 1,500 letters of support and constructive criticism were sent by parents, teachers and health workers.

Published in January 1999, the booklet tackles a wide range of issues, including self-esteem, puberty, menstruation, conception, contraception, STD/HIV/AIDS, condom use, sexuality, sexual abuse, and so on. The booklet is an informative reference for adolescents and health workers and a useful background material for reproductive and sexual health workshops conducted by NGOs, such as Parivar Seva Sansth in Calcutta and MSRA in Patna, and various organisations such as the British Council in Calcutta. Copies are sold at Rs. 5 each at book fairs, schools and bookshops.

Benefits of SCERT training continue to trickle

A training programme on adolescence education conducted by SCERT in 1998 continues to yield benefits, reports Mrs. C.S. Unteks, Headmistress of St. Andrew’s High School for Girls in Pune.

Inspired by Dr. K.S. Gaikwad, Coordinator of the SCERT project, teachers who came to the training have incorporated training activities in their own teaching programmes. The activities include essay and poetry writing competition, drawing contest, and monthly education programmes for parents using skits, films, lectures and group discussions.

Activities held at St. Andrew’s High School tackled the following issues: AIDS, a great disaster for human beings; male/female equality; a peaceful life: relief from drugs; moral values of mankind; family: the foundation of society; and my idea of an ideal home.

Community participation has been very encouraging, with students, teachers, parents, government authorities and other members joining the activities with full physical, intellectual and emotional vigour. There is popular agreement among the community members that such activities are more effective than classroom/textbook teaching.
Reaching adolescents: a role for radio

The radio is a powerful means to reach adolescents and to address their concerns, particularly those that are not being addressed by their families or by the school curriculum.

Proving this point is a radio programme, “Sandhikhan” (Bengali for adolescence), which aired on National Radio, covering adolescent health issues particularly reproductive health. The programme’s impact was the subject of a WBVHA survey among adolescent radio listeners in West Bengal.

Seventy-nine per cent (369 individual listeners) of the respondents rated the radio programme ‘very good’, with only a negligible one per cent describing it as ‘unnecessary’. Only 21 per cent of the respondents listened to the programme alone, with the majority listening in the company of friends, mothers, sisters, brothers, fathers, and other relatives. This suggested a wider group of listeners in addition to the programme’s primary target audience.

Clearly, the findings pointed to the effectiveness of teaching adolescent health on the air and the role played by WBVHA in developing healthy attitudes and habits among its young audience. The survey findings will provide the basis for producing educational materials on reproductive health for students as well as teachers.

INDONESIA

An Indonesian self-help group fights a winning battle against alcohol, drugs and STDs

The youth and children of Warakas, a disadvantaged community in North Jakarta, are reaping the benefits of interventions by a self-help group organised by the Yayasan Kusuma Buana (YKB) to prevent alcohol and drug abuse and to provide education about STDs. The group, the first of its kind in Indonesia, is composed of 25 peer educators who have been trained in basic counselling skills and in the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse and STDs at the YKB clinic in Tanjung Priok. Further training is provided at the group’s bi-weekly meetings, during which problems encountered in the field are also discussed.

Among the group’s activities are the publication of a bi-monthly Bulletin, a poster contest, outreach programmes with social and religious organisations in Warakas, and awareness campaigns that have a multiplier effect. Peer educators are encouraged to bring a friend or two to monthly meetings organised by the group, for the purpose of teaching them alcohol, drug and STD prevention and convincing them to invite their own friends to the next meeting. While increasing community awareness, this facilitates the identification of potential peer educators.

The group attributes its success to the unconditional support by all members of the community who have been increasingly concerned about the rapid rise of drug and alcohol addiction in Warakas. The district government in Warakas, parent organisations, and local youth groups have also been very supportive. The group works in a donated office which serves as a “base camp” for all its activities, including meetings and training/counselling sessions. Electricity bills are paid by the YKB.

Moved by the Warakas community’s enthusiastic response, the group continues to initiate productive educational activities. It is hoped that the project will be replicated in other urban areas where alcohol and drug addiction and the prevalence of STDs are worsening.
A three-year materials development project has concentrated its efforts in improving adolescent reproductive health in DKI Jakarta, DI Yogyakarta and West Java, where adolescent problems have been on the rise during the last decade; and in Lampang and Riau, which are generally known as vulnerable provinces where ARH problems are increasing.

What were the conditions that led to the project which is executed by BKKBN and implemented by PKBI (the Indonesian Planned Parenthood Association) and the Bureau of Non-Physical Family Resilience (BINOF)?

To cite some: the exclusion of sex education in the school curricula, the restricted availability of and access to information on reproductive health and family planning services for the youth, the limited range of activities by NGOs, such as the PKBI and NU.

Over the long-term, the project is focussed on raising the commitment of families (particularly parents) to instill in their children a better understanding of adolescent reproductive health concepts and desirable family values.

Over the short-term, the project is seeking to develop a basic IEC/counselling strategy and policy in support of a family-centred approach to adolescent reproductive health; promote better understanding of reproductive health needs of adolescents among policy makers, community leaders, parents and youth; and improving the IEC/counselling skills of personnel at the community level. It also hopes to provide information support to a related project on the strengthening of counselling services for families with adolescents and youth as members.

To achieve its goals, the following strategies have been adopted:

1. Preparation of a media development and production plan, taking into account activities of related UNFPA-funded projects being implemented at about the same time as this project;
2. Conducting a needs assessment to determine the progress made in promoting adolescent reproductive health and to identify priority needs in training and IEC;
3. Production of three types of materials sub-contracted with recognised media agencies or persons;
4. Implementation of three key activities: (i) set up a family centre for adolescent counselling on reproductive health in Lampung province and build a network in Riau (Batam) to serve the reproductive health needs of vulnerable groups; (ii) train 30 persons on family life education and sexual health, and reproductive health issues; (iii) carry out special programmes for vulnerable groups, such as women sex workers in Lampung and Riau provinces;
5. Periodic monitoring of activities by both PKBI and BINOF/BKKBN, including provision of necessary technical assistance.

The Central Lao Youth Union (LYU) is implementing the third component of the Reproductive Health Sub-Programme, which is supported by UNFPA and executed by JOICFP from 1998 to December 2000.

An aspect of the LYU’s work is a collaboration with the National Statistic Centre in a KAP (knowledge, attitude and practice) study on reproductive health among adolescents and young people between the ages of 15 and 24.

The study’s findings, to be published by the end of 1999, will provide data on their knowledge of birth spacing, contraceptive methods; their attitudes towards unwanted pregnancy, reproduction, STDs, HIV/AIDS and substance
abuse; and common youth practices concerning heterosexual relationships, sexual relationships, discussions on sex, planning for marriage, and sex with commercial sex workers. The study will cover 151 villages that have been randomly selected from the country’s 18 provinces, including Vientiane and one special zone. It will be carried out by 40 young, trained researchers. Two to four researchers will be assigned for each province.

The LYU is also collaborating with the Institute for Mother and Child Health, the Lao Women’s Union and the Ministry of Education in developing a reproductive health manual to be used as reference material for LYU leaders and volunteers at the district and village levels. The manual will cover reproductive health-related topics, such as physical and psychological changes during adolescence, sexual health, pregnancy and ways to prevent unwanted pregnancy, HIV/AIDS/STDs, substance abuse and new lifestyle of young people.

A dissemination and training workshop on how to use the manual will be conducted for LYU leaders, volunteers and facilitators at district levels. The manual will be pilot tested in two LYU project sites, namely Savannakhet and Champasak provinces, and will be distributed once modifications are made based on the results of the pilot tests.

MALAYSIA

Promotion of adolescent reproductive health and healthy living

A three-year project, “Promotion of Adolescent Reproductive Health and Healthy Living,” is moving ahead to achieve its four-pronged thrust: (i) development of a reproductive health of adolescent module (RHAM) for trainers and educators; (ii) training of trainers; (iii) sharing of ARH experiences in the ASEAN countries; and (iv) setting up three service models in Sabah, Selangor, and Terengganu to provide RH care to adolescents (10-19 years old) and youth (20-24 years old). The project, approved on 30 March 1998, is being implemented by the Federation of Family Planning Associations, Malaysia (FFPAM), with funding assistance from the UNFPA Country Office.

The RHAM provides a comprehensive treatment of seven adolescent-oriented concepts: understanding my body; taking care of my health; we are equal; reproductive rights and responsibilities; me and my values; my friends and I; and my family and I. Of these, reproductive rights and responsibilities and adolescent values are deemed particularly significant.

A draft of the trainer’s manual (lesson plans), the first part of the RHAM, has been finalized and will be tested in a workshop. The second part, a teacher’s guide, is under preparation.

The first in a series of training on the use of the RHAM will be a five-day national workshop for 50 teachers and educators, followed by several state level workshops for 150 teachers and 180 adolescent peer educators from state family planning associations.

An important South-to-South collaboration is a five-day inter-country workshop on the management of ARH, organised by the FFPAM for trainers from the ASEAN countries and local FPAs. The workshop will also promote the use and cost recovery scheme of the RHAM, while raising funds for the FFPAM.

The three service models have specific orientations. The Sabah model is setting up a youth clinic for adolescents within its existing clinic network. The Selangor/WP FPA is developing its Youth Resource Centre into a service model for training and youth involvement in RH activities, eventually introducing RH services into its programme.

The Terengganu FPA has developed a Youth Centre website which features the history, mission, and activities of the Terengganu FPA, an image gallery of FFPAM posters, feedback, and other State FPAs. Chat sessions began in August with two FPAs participating in the project.

Designed by an FPA member from Terengganu, the FFPAM-initiated youth homepage is managed by the Youth Club chairperson. Youth participation in its development is encouraged through contests, which have included the logo design contest and State FPA website design competition. The remaining sections, such as Youth Development and Our Corner, are awaiting construction and inputs from the youth are being solicited.
In a big way advocacy has triggered Mongolia’s adoption of a National Adolescent Health Programme. Much now depends on how advocacy can assist in raising and sustaining reproductive health awareness among policymakers and the general public. The point is made by Ms. Munkhuu, senior adviser to the RH Advocacy Project in Mongolia.

Ms. Munkhuu associates the Programme’s beginnings with the adoption in 1997 of the National Programme in Reproductive Health, which made adolescent health issues, including reproductive health, a public concern. To facilitate its implementation, formal health education has been incorporated in the secondary school curriculum, following an order passed by the Education Minister in April 1998.

Ms. Munkhuu also cites the impact of the Adolescent Health Education Project funded by WHO, the Reproductive Health Advocacy Project, and the UNFPA-supported Adolescent Reproductive Health Project, which has enabled the training of 15 master trainers, 25 school teachers, and 25 NGO staff as sexuality educators. In addition, the project is developing training packages and background materials for teachers. Since August 1998, a quarterly newspaper for adolescents Uerkhel-Love has been published and educational programmes on adolescent sexuality have been produced for radio and television.

Describing other developments, Ms. Munkhuu reports that a hot line service in Ulaanbaatar has been started by an NGO, Adolescent Future Center, in collaboration with the UNDP Office in Mongolia and the Ulaanbaatar City Mayor’s Chancellery, which provided financial support. Additional support came from a charity race to raise funds for STD/HIV/AIDS, which was organised by the Netherlands Embassy in June 1999 in Ulaanbaatar.

A trained doctor and volunteer medical students operate the hot line service daily from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. They provide counselling and moral support and make clinic referrals to adolescents requiring antenatal care or STD services. However, their work is constrained by the lack of telephone services in underprivileged areas, the limited number of telephone lines to access the hot line service, and the unavailability of contraceptives and STD diagnostic services to offer the callers.

In conclusion, Ms. Munkhuu stresses the need to make the National Adolescent Health Programme more effective and responsive by improving the country’s information system and by increasing reproductive health awareness among policy makers and the general public. Advocacy training must be actively pursued, she adds, suggesting incorporation of the following topics: basic elements of advocacy, identifying advocacy needs, advocacy objectives, target audience, developing and delivering policy documents, media role in advocacy, and monitoring and evaluating advocacy.
Since its start ten years ago, the DAFLEY Project (Development and Family Life Education for the Youth), based in Davao City, has kept to its mission: to make the youth “enlightened citizens of the future” by teaching them reproductive health, gender equality and responsible parenthood. Established by the Family Planning Organization of the Philippines, the DAFLEY Project is being carried out through the Davao Teen Centre (DTC) which provides reproductive and sexual health care services through counselling, face-to-face or by telephone. Peer counsellors are trained in human sexuality, counselling, values formation and communication, in a three-day workshop, preparing them emotionally, psychologically and even physically for the rigorous tasks ahead.

The Centre’s relaxed atmosphere and the friendliness of the peer counsellors have made the DTC a favourite hangout for teenagers. On the average, the Centre receives 120 to 125 calls a month and up to 25 walk-in youth, particularly on weekends. To accommodate youngsters who are too shy to come to the Centre, peer counsellors arrange to meet them elsewhere. Counselling hours have been extended to 8 p.m.

In an effort to reach out to more teenagers in Mindanao, the DTC last year introduced a radio programme, “Love Letters Straight from Your Heart”. The programme airs over DXBM on the FM band, Monday to Saturday, from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. Public response has been enthusiastic; thousands of letters have been received from various parts of Mindanao, requesting advice on various aspects of boy-girl relationships, same sex relationships, unplanned pregnancies, and other topics. The letters are read on-the-air by a disc jockey and advice is provided by a DTC peer counsellor. Listeners are then invited to phone-in their opinions.

Another radio programme, “Love, Sex, Marriage and Career”, discusses more complex and serious problems with the help of professional guidance counsellors from reputable colleges and universities in Davao. The programme, which is coordinated by DTC peer counsellors, airs over DXRP every Saturday from 9:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

There are plans to replicate the counselling programmes in a sister company of DXBM on the AM band.

Youngsters who have benefitted from DTC counselling refute a conservative belief that sex education leads to promiscuity and sexual experimentation. They cite the respect that they have for their bodies and their sense of responsibility as proof of the value of the reproductive health education and services that they have received.

Resisting risky sexual activity: SHINE project shows how

What good is a catchy acronym? A lot, going by the experience of SHINE, which has been stirring public interest since its launch in July 1998 in urban Cagayan de Oro.

SHINE stands for “sexual health initiatives through networking and education”, an eighteen-month project on reproductive health for young adults (13-25 year olds). A project of CARE-Philippines, it targets the two most likely places to effectively reach large numbers of youth: the school and the workplace. The project was completed in December 1999, having made significant achievements in increasing the youth’s knowledge of important reproductive health issues and enabling them to make informed decisions about their reproductive life. The project has also established a referral network of service providers to ensure sustainable access to quality reproductive health services.

The project’s underlying belief is that informed choices, skills building, support structures and networking are the tools to develop responsible sexuality.

The SHINE Project addresses constraints to promoting adolescent reproductive health in the Philippines.

Discussing sex is taboo in traditional Philippine culture, even at home, which is a potent source of information. This leaves the school and workplace as the next most effective providers of information. CARE-Philippines through the SHINE

PHILIPPINES

The Davao Teen Centre empowers the youth of Mindanao

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The SHINE Project encourages the involvement of the youth, school and community through the parents and other concerned organisations/agencies. It enables the youth to increase their knowledge and to focus on values that would guide them in making the right decisions about their reproductive life.

The SHINE Project does not limit teaching to imparting knowledge and transforming values but also includes providing necessary negotiation, communication and relationship skills that enable teenagers to apply those values. Knowledge must translate to skills that empower.

The SHINE Project provides supporting structures for the young, including youth-friendly medical facilities that offer counselling and medical services.

The SHINE Project is supported by corporate partners, high schools and health service providers.

SRI LANKA

Giving adolescent reproductive health and population issues a world view

The Colombo-based Worldview International Foundation is deploying television advocacy to address reproductive and sexual health and reproductive rights issues.

Under the project, Television Advocacy Programme for Adolescent Reproductive Health and Population Issues, Worldview will produce 52 video programmes on themes chosen by the UNFPA and relevant NGOs and institutions. Priority is placed on reproductive and sexual health and family planning activities that are supportive of national population policies. The programmes will cover country experiences in Asia and other regions.

Once the stories are approved, script writing and recording of raw material will commence. Video editing will be done at the YA*TV Central Editing Unit in Colombo. Modifications will be made to suit the video programmes’ specific target audiences.

The video programmes will be broadcast through YA*TV, which covers 18 countries in Asia and reaches over 385 million viewers, and other channels. They will be distributed through the Worldview network of over 1,000 grassroots NGOs and CBOs. In its first year, the project is expected to reach Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. Coverage will extend to China by the end of 1999 and to other South East Asian countries by 2000 onwards.

Worldview and YA*TV

A pioneering organisation in development communication, the Worldview International Foundation is recognised for the highly innovative Young Asia Television (YA*TV) which it established in 1995 to provide information and education to the Asian youth. YA*TV covers Asia-focussed environmental concerns, news and current affairs for the youth, and women’s problems. In addition, it produces in-depth analyses of child poverty, illiteracy, sustainable development, arts, culture, and other issues.

Complementing the EC/UNFPA RH Initiative

The Worldview project complements special strategies under the European Commission/UNFPA Initiative for Reproductive Health in Asia, established in 1997. The Initiative’s particular concern is the creation of sustainable mechanisms to respond to the unmet demands of vulnerable groups and deprived populations. It promotes the development of suitable alternatives to current systems that will contribute to declines in fertility rates and mother and child morbidity and mortality.

To-date, the strategies under the EC/UNFPA RH Initiative have included the following: Community participation in full RH services in Nepal and Pakistan; Adolescent reproductive health in Cambodia, Laos, Sri Lanka and Vietnam; and Improved quality of RH care in Bangladesh.

(Please turn to the next page)
Worldview’s Goals

By promoting the global dissemination of information and education, the Worldview Project seeks to (i) strengthen young people’s participation in IEC processes; (ii) advance TV media advocacy to provide comprehensive messages about health and safer sex, reproductive health problems, reproductive rights, population information and the serious issues of trafficking in women and abuse of children; (iii) advocate the inclusion of population, gender, sexual and reproductive health issues in the school curricula, while maintaining cultural and religious integrity; (iv) provide extended knowledge of adolescent reproductive health to all concerned groups and promote responsible and healthy sexual and reproductive behaviour among the youth and adolescents; (v) encourage positive attitudes towards preventive methods among the target groups, parents, teachers and the larger community and develop their behavioural skills to promote safer sexual practices; (vi) promote the importance of incorporating gender perspectives and child abuse issues in all youth and adolescent-related activities; and (vii) establish close co-operation, through the Worldview NGO network, among organisations at the national, regional and international levels, youth groups and NGOs involved in sexual health and the prevention of HIV/AIDS and child abuse.

Supporting national education and training in RH and population/development

The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) is implementing a project, “Support to national education and training programme on RH and population/development” at the request of the Ministry of Planning and Investment. Executed by UNFPA, UNESCO and the Government of SR Vietnam, the project has a duration of two and a half years, starting in August 1998. Its long-term objectives are two-fold:

Population education: To enable students, at all levels in all types of schools, to understand population, reproductive health, and adolescent issues, and to make better life decisions.

Population and development training: To strengthen national population training programmes for students, researchers and government personnel in population and development planning and research, and to develop a cohort of trainers by improving the quality and content of national training programmes.

Relevant Publications

The Adolescent Reproductive Health Education Training Manual. This publication consists of 12 modules, each divided into two parts. Part I focuses on improving the teachers’ understanding and knowledge. Part 2 introduces the subjects to young people, in- or out-of-school. The modules are as follows: introduction to the training course; adolescence; friendship, love and parenthood; sexuality and reproduction; early pregnancy and contraceptives; adolescent health; gender equality; adolescents and children’s rights; parents, family and the community; population and development; population policies in Vietnam; and from family planning to reproductive health.

The training approaches include presentation with the active participation of learners; brainstorming; inquiry/discovery approach; problem-solving; value clarification; group work; role-play; and simulation game.

Guidebook for Provincial Facilitators to Teach the Trial Version of the Course: How to Teach Sensitive RH Topics. This 12-part guidebook opens with an overview of the course, describing and assessing the objectives, followed by a course plan. Part I includes an introduction for the facilitator and detailed schedule; Part II includes an introduction for the facilitator (basic structure and management); lesson plans and participatory methodologies; discussion following the practice teaching; and instruction for small groups for each lesson practice session. Part III consists of nine short sessions and a detailed schedule.

References for the opening sessions cover problems and data concerning selected reproductive health topics; reproductive health and rights; similarities and differences between population education and sex or reproductive health education; and participatory teaching methodologies. Additional lesson plans and lesson ideas are provided.
Its short-term objectives cover improvements to the teaching of population education; integration of population education into technical and continuing education programmes; expansion of teachers’ roles as reproductive health counsellors/trainers; strengthening the MOET’s capacity to manage and plan population education and population/development activities; improvements to the curriculum in population and development, as well as to the training and research capacity in this field.

The project’s outputs by 1999 include a test item bank (27 books/1,600 items); posters for POPED teaching-learning (168); self-learning with guidance course book; trainers’ guidebook on methods for teaching sensitive RH topics; POPED curriculum for the Master’s, continuing education, and technical school levels; course book on POPED for the Master’s degree (13 books); POPED guide for teachers of continuing education and technical schools; trainers’ POPED guide for continuing education; handbook of linkages between schools and non-school institutions; draft handbook for POPED managers; and videos of lessons on participatory methods.

Survey reveals slow strides in promoting adolescent reproductive health in Vietnam

by Dr. Nguyen Minh Thang (Ph.D.), member of the National Committee for Population and Family Planning and Population Research Consultants

In Vietnam, the sheer size of the adolescent population (some 12-13 million) provides a compelling argument for promoting adolescent reproductive health. However, a number of obstacles have set back efforts.

The UNFPA-funded project VIE/97/P12 is one of several initial efforts by the Vietnamese Government to promote adolescent reproductive health knowledge. An ARH mass media campaign implemented under the project focusses on promoting friendships, pure love and safe sexual behaviour and on increasing adolescents’ access to RH services.

According to a survey report, only 53.8 per cent of the target group knew the term “reproductive health” prior to the first EC campaign in 1998. The figure rose to 95 per cent after the campaign. However, there remains a great demand for reproductive health information among adolescents. An evaluation of the first campaign showed that approximately 40 per cent of adolescents require more information. Another study, project VIE/97/P11 recorded a higher figure of 72.8 per cent. Under this project, a national contest and the second campaign on reproductive health were organised.

To gather information for monitoring the adolescent reproductive health programme, Population Research Consultants recently conducted a survey. The findings revealed the following setbacks:

Adolescents favour radio, TV and newspapers as sources of RH information.

While radio, television and newspapers are the most popular channels of information, inconvenient broadcast schedules discourage adolescents from relying on community radio broadcasts for RH information.

Adolescents have no knowledge of pregnancy, STDs, and HIV/AIDS prevention.

Sixteen per cent of the respondents say they do not know how to prevent pregnancy and 13.5 per cent say they do not know how to prevent STDs, including HIV/AIDS.

The demand for RH information varies according to the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents.

Most of the male adolescents are interested in information concerning sexuality, STDs, contraceptives (especially condoms), and other sex-related matters. However, they are reluctant to solicit this information from their parents and teachers.

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While the majority of adolescents do not favour pre-marital sex and pre-marital pregnancy, their choice is to keep and deliver the baby in case of pre-marital pregnancy.

While 72.8 per cent of the respondents do not accept pre-marital pregnancy, 47.8 per cent favour keeping the baby in case of pre-marital pregnancy, compared with 14.8 per cent who favour abortion.

Adolescents give a poor rating to the quality of RH/FP services at the centres.

Adolescents demand better RH/FP services than are currently offered at the centres. To achieve successful results for the project, “Supportive promotion for adolescent reproductive health”, adolescent RH awareness should be raised and they should be provided adequate information on reproductive health care services. All in all, greater addition should be given to the needs of adolescents.

Adolescents need to further understand RH but not knowing its meaning, they cannot tell what type of information they require.

Seventy-eight per cent of the respondents want to obtain more information about RH. 18.2 per cent do not know what information they want, while 49.4 per cent say they need information about RH in general. Those who have heard of the first IEC campaign about ARH demand further information about this issue.

Adolescents have poor knowledge of adolescent reproductive health.

The majority of the survey respondents (67.3 per cent) do not know the meaning of RH or do not remember coming across the term. Among those who know the term RH (32.7 per cent), 21.8 per cent do not know its meaning and 78.2 per cent have limited knowledge of the contents of RH.

Adolescents have poor knowledge of RH and poor interest in RH/FP service facilities.

Of the respondents who know of at least one RH/FP health centre (52.2 per cent), 10.6 per cent have visited the centre and 11.4 per cent are aware of the types of services offered. Nearly 50 per cent of the respondents know of the services provided at RH/FP centres (317 out of 677), compared with 38 per cent who do not know what services are available. Few respondents know the specific types of services, with contraceptive services (which reach 38.6 respondents) being the most frequently mentioned. Primary health care for mother and child is known to 19.7 per cent, abortion to 11.3 per cent and delivery to 9.9 per cent.

Friendship and love are often discussed among adolescents, but sexuality rarely is.

The majority of the respondents (93.2 per cent) exchange views with friends about friendship, 44.1 per cent exchange views about love, and 15.1 per cent about sexuality. The age group 19 and above talk about sexuality more often than the younger group (29.9 per cent vs 5.9 per cent). Some 18.1 per cent of male adolescents discuss sexuality, compared with 11.8 per cent of females.

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Credit Photo: Roger Lemoyne, UNICEF.
Millions of young television viewers in Asia have the Young Asia Television (YA*TV) to thank for their education. Utilising land-based and satellite networking, the YA*TV channel, Network for Asian Youth, reaches 250 million viewers in South Asia, 135 million in South East Asia and 24 million in the Middle East, bringing them news and analysis of Asia-focussed environmental concerns, current affairs, population and reproductive health issues, social problems including poverty and illiteracy, arts and culture, and other topics.

YA*TV also broadcasts programmes produced by different countries on reproductive and sexual health, AIDS/STD prevention, and youth/adolescent awareness of sexual health.

Worldview International Foundation, an international NGO that has consultative status at the United Nations and is headquartered in Colombo, Sri Lanka, brings 20 years of experience in training, programme production and broadcasting to YA*TV. The Foundation launched the highly innovative programme in October 1995, driven by a simple thrust: “Television must encourage dialogue and debate; advance the creativity of people, especially the younger generation who will be the leaders of the future.”

The Foundation further asserts that television attracts greater public attention to issues of equality in the home and in public life, and provides young people with new images, ideas and ideals. It also gives women, the youth and children an opportunity to have their voices heard. The Foundation considers it essential to democratise television communication, to produce more quality development-oriented TV programmes that incorporate discussion and interaction to obtain the people's stories and inputs, and to ensure that they are responsive to the people’s needs.

YA*TV programmes are made available on as wide a network as possible to counteract the proliferation of mass-produced, low quality and low-value mass media. Many television channels are flooded with poor programmes that negatively influence young people’s standards, values, and behaviour.

To reach many more millions of viewers, YA*TV programmes are networked with the Asian Broadcasting Union, of which the Foundation is a member, and to 1,000 other organisations through the Foundation’s own NGO network. Efforts to network its media centres are underway.

YA*TV programmes are produced in English, Thai, Tamil, Bahasa Malaysia, Urdu, Arabic, Hindi, Khmer, Vietnamese, Nepalese, and Sinhala. By late 1999, broadcasts are expected to include Chinese and other major Asian languages.

YA*TV will also be the outlet for the 52 video programmes being produced by the Foundation under the project, Television Advocacy Programme for Adolescent Reproductive Health and Population Issues. The video themes will be chosen by UNFPA and relevant NGOs and institutions, with priority given to reproductive and sexual health and family planning activities that are

(Please turn to the next page)
supportive of national population policies. However, the video programmes will not be limited to Asian experiences, but will include those of other regions. Initially, the programmes will be broadcast in the local languages of the seven countries participating in the project, namely Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. Future broadcasts are expected to reach Laos, China, Latin America and the African Continent.

**A pioneer in development communication**

With support from UNFPA, SIDA, UNICEF, IPPF, NORAD and other agencies, the Foundation has been implementing development communication activities in population concerns in Asia, Africa and the Middle East, since 1980. Its programme initiatives are project intervention strategies aimed at reaching specific target groups via a multi-media approach.

YA*TV is managed by Worldview Global Television, which has been set up between Worldview and like-minded private sectors to help ensure its financial viability.

**Television educates while it entertains**

The Foundation’s network provides the medium for value-based broadcasts in an entertaining fashion. Financial benefits accrue from producing and broadcasting powerful programmes with meaningful educational entertainment to a well-defined market.

The beneficiaries are millions of young men and women who have poor fundamental knowledge of sexual and reproductive health and other topics. Young people below the age of 24 represent 54 per cent of the world population. Many have poor access, if any, to healthy and complete sex education. In many countries, high rates of teenage pregnancy and sexually-transmitted diseases have led to increased rates of maternal morbidity, including deaths due to illegal abortions, and the spread of HIV/AIDS. The inter-relationship between contraception methods, pregnancy, gender relations, sexuality, fertility and HIV/AIDS has a powerful effect on country socio-economic factors, including population growth and environmental deterioration.

The International Office of Worldview International Foundation in Colombo monitors programme activities on a continuing basis and uses the information gathered for impact assessment and long-term planning. The productions are scrutinized by top international journalists in many Asian countries and by experts from international TV channels. Particular attention is given to participatory communication to ensure that the YA*TV project objectives are met.

A telling measure of YA*TV’s success is the skills and knowledge enhancement achieved by the target viewers. The significance will be seen in the strong impact on national, regional and global development issues.

Education-entertainment strategies utilising television and other media have been successful in many countries in the promotion of family planning, improving the status of women and other related areas. To be sure, YA*TV’s innovative programmes have made information and services appealing and accessible to youth as well as to adult audiences.

### What’s showing on YA*TV?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>YA Cafe</strong></td>
<td>Focusses on the lighter side of young people’s lifestyles. For starters, try Korean art; for the first course, a little Mongolian cookery or a peek at Singaporean fashion; have as main course hot air ballooning in Nepal; and for dessert, enjoy the music of the Indian Ghazal Singers. Produced in a relaxed, casual style, YA Cafe is an interesting introduction to the culture and sophistication of modern Asia. It keeps its finger on the pulse of the youth and is a hit with today’s young persons.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nature Calls</strong></td>
<td>Offers exciting half-hour journeys through Mother Earth, from the rainforest of the Amazon to the plains of the Serengeti; from the peaks of the Himalayas to the coral reefs of the Maldives. Nature Calls’ TV cameras roam the world in search of stories that depict nature at its best and show how efforts to achieve its sustainable use, complemented by the deployment of science and technology, are helping to preserve Mother Earth. The “Eco-Warrior” segment brings inspiring stories of people who are actively involved in the care and preservation of our planet.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>I-Zone</strong></td>
<td>Offers informative documentaries that highlight important issues. The stories go beyond the ordinary and offer fresh insights and knowledge of the world. Old and new facets of our history and culture are featured, including the daily life of people in the Lost Kingdom of Mustang and the story of the boat gypsies of Bangladesh. No story is too tough or controversial for I-Zone. It tackles such issues as the impact of economic growth, the drug trade, human rights abuses, sexuality and other difficult topics.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>YA Tribe</strong></td>
<td>Vibes from the Tribe. People of different races, religions, and cultures make up the Asian tribe, the world’s largest. YA-Tribe emphasises the similarities and differences that make Asia the world’s most culturally diverse continent. These are conveyed by presenting Asian poetry and art, the gateways to understanding any culture, combined with scenes that depict gender issues, levels of socio-economic development, and so on. A special segment, “The Gong”, promotes traditional Asian music and art and explores the fascinating fusion of eastern and western music and art forms.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Space to Let</strong></td>
<td>Provocative and enterprising, this programme looks at the world from the perspective of women. The programme profiles successful and courageous women who have risen above stereotypes and overcome cultural barriers to achieve their full potential. Witty, thoughtful, and full of life, Space to Let is the space to be.</td>
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A common thread that runs through the work of the Foundation for Adolescent Development, Inc. (FAD) is the mission to “help young adults develop their potentials in becoming whole and emotionally secure through proper value formation, thereby making them self-reliant and productive individuals and responsible members of the community.”

Since its establishment 14 years ago, FAD has been addressing adolescent health and sexuality and development issues, running programmes and services that are dedicated to promoting and popularising the view that sexuality covers the total development of a person. An example is the UNFPA-funded FAD project, “Capability-Building of Colleges and Universities in Metro Manila on Adolescent Health, Sexuality and Development”.

Based on FAD’s experiences in running the Manila Centre for Young Adults (MCYA), a student resource centre set up in 1984 in Manila’s university belt, the project utilised a “peer education” or “youth-to-youth” approach to provide information, counselling and referral services on health and sexuality issues. The project, also known as the “Campus-Based Model”, was developed in 1996 and implemented in 1997.

FAD took various steps to put the project in place – from advocacy to schools and needs assessment, from training student leaders in adolescent health, sexuality and development, planning and counselling to touring referral agencies.

FAD’s Innovative Strategy
In terms of target implementors, the project involved two sets of students. One group consisted of student leaders from various organisations who were selected by the school administration. The other group consisted of selected students who became peer facilitators and counsellors under the umbrella of the school’s guidance programme.

As an innovative strategy in reaching out to adolescents, the campus-based model has these unique features: (i) it is campus-based yet uses an off-classroom approach; (ii) it is a youth-to-youth intervention; (iii) it calls for understanding and management of adolescent health and sexuality; (iv) it fosters a sustainable mechanism through the possible integration of these concerns in student organisations; and (v) it is led, implemented and evaluated by students.

FAD’s implementation of the project has yielded varied experiences, as it has had to apply the model to the specific settings of the five participating colleges and universities, adopt innovative strategies suited to each, and learn different sets of lessons. These are reflected in the following work areas: needs assessment research, advocacy, capability-building, emergence of core group structure, programme sustainability mechanism, and evaluation.

A SURE THING, NOT JUST A FAD: Youth-to-youth approach to health and sexuality issues

Five colleges and universities are participating in a project, “Capability-Building of Colleges and Universities in Metro Manila on Adolescent Health, Sexuality and Development”, developed by the Foundation for Adolescent Development, Inc. (FAD). The five partner schools are Arellano University, Manuel Luis Quezon University, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Systems Technology Institute and the University of the East.

Their consensus: Peer education is a sure thing, not just a fad.
Documenting FAD’s Experience

FAD’s experiences are documented in a book, A Resource Book on Adolescent Health, Sexuality and Development: A Youth to Youth Model, developed and produced by FAD with financial assistance from UNFPA and the Commission on Population of the Philippines. The book is divided into two parts: Part I, The Campus-Based Structure Capability-Building Model, is made up of three section: (i) The Project Concept, details the campus-based model, its concept, objectives, and strategies; (ii) The Capability-Building Framework, describes the model’s components and the theoretical basis of the framework; and (iii) Experiences in Implementing the Model, discusses the application of the model to site-specific settings and the innovative strategies adopted by each as well as the lessons learned.

Part II, Appendices, contains the training modules, the action plans developed by the student leaders as a result of the training workshop, a directory of service providers, a summary of student-led activities implemented in the five partner-schools, highlights of the Student Congress and a sample of the students’ resolutions. These supplements are provided as reference materials.

The book’s target readers are student leaders, peer facilitators, school administrators, guidance counsellors, agencies with services and programmes for adolescents, and professionals who are interested in working in the field of adolescent health, sexuality, and development or who want to pursue a similar programme or to replicate the model in their particular settings.

ADVOCACY

FAD’s specific experiences concerning advocacy to schools are described in the following article, which has been excerpted from the aforementioned resource book.

Exploring partnership and advocacy to school authorities

Before concluding its partnership with the five partner schools, FAD conducted individual consultations and negotiation meetings with the eleven non-CEAP colleges and universities in Metro Manila. CEAP stands for the College Education Association of the Philippines.

The majority of colleges and universities approached were receptive. Some school officials saw the project as an appropriate and timely intervention to ease the shortage of guidance counsellors, citing 430,000 as the ratio of guidance counsellors to students.

FAD wrote a formal request to the respective presidents of the five partner schools, seeking a meeting to formally introduce the campus-based project. The presidents then designated school officials as their representatives to meet with FAD. They included the dean of student affairs and community service, the dean of students, the guidance department chief or officer in charge.

While acknowledging FAD’s potential in helping to create programmes tailored to student needs, the student leaders and school officials raised certain fears and doubts about the project. They cited the following points:

- problems related to boy-girl relationship, intimacy, and sexuality do not prevail in their school;
- giving information on sexuality and reproductive health might lead to promiscuity;
- FAD might use these schools to source funds for itself;
- the school lacks resources for a counterpart fund;
- school activities can be done only on Saturdays so as not to conflict with academic classes;
- a leftist group might penetrate the project;
- the Office of Student Affairs of a particular school is undergoing restructuring; and
- provisions in the memorandum of agreement (MoA) are one-sided, in favour of FAD.

The roles of partnership: clarification and agreement

Through meetings and consultations with each participating university, FAD clarified the role of the partnership and produced an agreement. An MoA signed with each institution sealed the partnership, having cleared earlier doubts and misunderstanding. Thus, in consultation with each partner FAD revised the contents of the agreement and referred to the document as a letter of understanding.

FAD’s roles:

- conduct series of consultations, meetings, and pre-orientation sessions with presidents and university administrators, and designate departments to orient them about the campus-based project;
- conduct a needs assessment research to identify problems and concerns related to adolescent health, sexuality and development drawn from the perceptions of students and school authorities;
- conduct capability-building activities like orientation workshops and training in adolescent health, sexuality, and development for student leaders and peer facilitators/counsellors;
- provide technical assistance in the formulation of action plans, implementation and evaluation of project activities for student leaders and peer facilitators;
- assist the universities/colleges in monitoring the implementation of the students’ action plans, and other technical assistance needed by the students in relation to the implementation of the adolescent health, sexuality and development programme;
- in partnership with the participating universities/colleges, initiate quarterly meetings with school officials/heads and design a feedback mechanism among student organisations involved in the project;
- provide the universities the opportunity for networking and referrals through agency visits; and
- produce a resource book to document the various approaches used by the participating universities/colleges, serving as models for possible replication in other schools.

The roles of universities/colleges:

- ensure the participation of student organisations in the project;
- approve the action plans prepared by the participating student organisations;
- provide the venue for coordination, meetings, focus group discussions, and other dialogues;
- provide the project adviser(s) who would give administrative support to the FAD team in the implementation of project activities;
- identify student organisations, student leaders, and peer facilitators/counsellors who would participate in the training activities; and
- together with FAD, monitor the execution of the student leaders’ action plans.

The student leaders and peer facilitators’ tasks:

- design and implement action plans in relation to the adolescent health sexuality and development programme; and
- participate in meetings, consultations, training activities, feedback sessions, and other activities initiated by FAD or the university/college where they belong.
At its completion, the project is expected to have reached at least 30 per cent of the combined student population of the five participating colleges and universities with messages on responsible adolescent sexual and reproductive health behaviour and the provision of appropriate health counselling services.

Over the long-term the project’s lasting impact will be seen in improvements to the reproductive health of Filipino adolescents. Statistics reported in the 1994 Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality Study (YAFSS II) of the University of the Philippines Population Institute paint a rather grim picture at present.

Some highlights

Of the country’s total population of 70 million people, 49 per cent are below 20 years old. Of these, 20 per cent make up the 15-19 age group. Eighteen per cent or 2.5 million of those aged 15-24 had engaged in premarital sex. Among those who are 21 years old, 82 per cent of females claim to be virgins, while only 55 per cent of the males admit to the same status.

Premarital sex is not a one-time experience but is usually repeated. Seventy per cent of the girls engage in repeated sex with the first partner, while 62 per cent of the boys engage in repeated sex with at least another partner. About five per cent of the adolescent population are already in live-in arrangements.

The average age at marriage among women is 24 years old, and 26 years among men. In the age group 20-24, almost 30 per cent are married before they reach age 20.
This website is a one-stop shop for social communications needs to promote public health and public welfare, with particular focus on training in adolescent sexual health and reproductive health issues. The website points to its anti-drugs mass media campaign as its launching pad. The “experience section” describes the Thoughtshop Foundation’s planning and implementing activities, including the following: (i) ASK (AIDS, Sex, Knowledge), an interactive newspaper column for young people on sexual health awareness, published in the junior section of the newspaper, Voice. The columns deal with self-esteem, puberty, masturbation, menstruation, safe sex, contraception, condom use, STD/HIV/AIDS, pregnancy and sexuality; (ii) ASK booklet, a compilation of 21 issues of the ASK columns, distributed through schools, bookshops and book fairs; (iii) Study of sexual health problems and information needs of young people in West Bengal; (iv) Aakrant, a video film on HIV/AIDS awareness for industrial workers; (v) development of communication materials on “sex trade and law” for peer educators; (vi) Champa Kit, a reproductive health teaching aids kit for out-of-school adolescent girls in rural areas; (vii) Shankar Kit, a similar kit for rural adolescent boys; and (viii) a video film on HIV/AIDS awareness for truck drivers.

In other sections, the website provides a listing of on-going projects, publications, future plans, and quiz of the month. This information-rich website details the Foundation’s projects, publications and outputs. An interactive section invites adolescent viewers to participate in the “quiz of the month” and to suggest activities that Thoughtshop Foundation can adopt. The easy-to-navigate site provides complete text of various materials.

A website within the Federation of Planned Parenthood Associations of Malaysia, the youth homepage is a new and fast-growing site that disseminates information of interest to the Association’s Youth Club members. The first page is attractive, interactive and provocative. It poses questions that invite feedback with regard to real-life problems faced by the youth, including boy-girl relationships. It also lends an ear to young people who need someone to talk to and encourages them to exercise their rights.
Other sections cover the history of the Youth Club and its objectives, which are as follows: to provide education in human sexuality and family life, and to provide reproductive health services to young people between the ages of 10 and 24. A section on the mission statement provides the framework and platform that are the basis for all the programmes and activities. The Activities page briefly describes the operation of a chat room, logo design and website design contests, the development of a Reproductive Health of Adolescent Module, camps, talks, seminars, workshop, counselling, dialogues, training programmes and other activities. A wide range of posters, pamphlets, and charts produced by FFPAM can be viewed at the Image Gallery. Sections that are under construction include “Our Corner” and “Youth Development”. Finally, the last section lists the addresses of the 13 member States of the Family Planning Association.

This website gives the young people of Asia opportunities to voice their opinions. YA*TV was launched in 1995 by young people for young people, with a focus on Asian cultural, environmental and development programmes. YA*TV reaches more than 150 million viewers through television networks in ten countries. It expects to serve some 250 million Asian homes by the year 2000. Operated by the Worldview International Foundation as a self-sustaining but non-profit enterprise, YA*TV enjoys the support of the United Nations, UNESCO, UNICEF, the Asian Development Bank and other international organisations.

The website is new and the various sections are just starting to fill up. The first page describes YA*TV’s history, objectives, target audiences and scope, followed by a listing of the programmes contents: YA Cafe is a TV magazine programme on arts, culture and lifestyles, including street fashion and stories of people and places from Java to Japan; Nature Calls is an environmental programme that shows the “wild, the free and the beautiful” world of nature; I-Zone is a user friendly source of information on compelling issues like child poverty, global warming, sexuality, reproductive health, and illiteracy; YA Tribe – Vibes from the Tribe deals with customs, music, dance, festivals and ceremonies around Asia; Space to Let looks at the world through the eyes of women and analyses their problems; Young Outlook contains news and current affairs for young audiences, discussing the real stories behind the headlines; and Viet to Tell are stories that grip the imagination and fuel the emotions. The docudrama portrays the other side of life around the world. The website also introduces the members of the staff.
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Credits:

We welcome your comments, suggestions and contributions. Please address your correspondence to the Regional Clearing House on Population Education and Communication, (RECHPEC) UNESCO, PROAP, P.O. Box 967, Prakanong Post Office, Bangkok 10110, Thailand. RECHPEC URL: http://www.unescobkk.org/infores/rechpec Tel. (66-2) 391-0577 Fax. (66-2) 391-0866 E-mail address: rechpec@ksc7.th.com

New and Recent PUBLICATIONS


Shah, Meera Kaul; Rose Zambezi and Mary Simasiku. Listening to young voices: facilitating participatory appraisals on reproductive health with adolescents. Washington, D.C.: FOCUS on Young Adults 1999. 88 p. (Focus tool series 1)