



# POSITION PAPER

Provision of  
**Comprehensive Sexuality  
Education to all young  
people in Nepal**



RIGHT HERE  
RIGHT NOW



This paper has been published with technical support of Right Here Right Now Nepal platform, which is a strategic partnership between fifteen likeminded youth-led and youth-serving organizations<sup>i</sup>, that are advocating for enhanced experience of young people on sexual and reproductive health, focused on three thematic areas - provision of age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education, legalization of marriage equality and provision of stigma-free, youth-friendly safe abortion services.

Visible Impact, which is a partner organization of Right Here Right Now, is a young women led organization that aims to bring visible impact on the lives of every women, every girls and every youth by unleashing the social and economic leadership of girls, women and youth through human centered approaches.

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# CONTENTS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
CALL FOR ACTION	5
REFERENCES	12

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

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AYON	Association of Youth Organizations Nepal
BBC	Beyond Beijing Committee
BDS	Blue Diamond Society
CDC	Curriculum Development Center
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
CTEVT	Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training
DEO	District Education Office
FPAN	Family Planning Association of Nepal
FSGMN	Federation of Sexual and Gender Minorities Nepal
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HUDEP	Human Development and Environment Protection Forum
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
MoE	Ministry of Education
NFEC	Non Formal Education Center
NLSS	Nepal Living Standard Survey
RUWON	Rural Women's Network Nepal
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
YAN	Youth Action Nepal
YDC	Youth Development Center

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper aims at highlighting the importance and current gaps in addressing comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) for young people, and to call the Government to fulfill the needs, and other stakeholders to support the Government in doing so. This paper will serve as a basis for evidence based advocacy for all the advocates and activists of CSE.

Plethora of literatures exist that highlight the importance of teaching comprehensive sexuality education to young people, and the result have shown that integrating CSE in school curriculum enhances the quality of life of the individual for lifetime. Introducing sexuality education in the school curriculum was a great achievement in 2013, that has gone through several amendments, but there are still several structural and implementation challenges - the bulk of course is taught in class 9 when the students would have already known through other sources, the focus is on sexual and reproductive health and less on rights, inadequate capacity of teachers to deliver the content appropriately, the lack of monitoring framework to assess the quality of delivery of CSE sessions, and leaving behind the most vulnerable group of out of school children.



Hence, the following actions have been called upon:

○ Though the current curriculum is progressive, there are gaps and inadequacies that need to be fulfilled immediately. We urge the Curriculum Development Center to address these gaps immediately to make the curriculum comprehensive and age appropriate as per the IPPF guidelines. Besides the current curriculum for class 6-10, it should be expanded to include students of class 3-5 and 11-12 as well.

○ The teacher's training is crucial for effective delivery of CSE. In fact, building teacher capacity to deliver age-appropriate CSE, is proven to support the development of learners' life skills. Thus, we stress on the importance of stronger teacher training programs at all levels that is owned by the Government.

The Government should mobilize alternative education as a gateway to providing CSE to out of school students. A curriculum tailored for out of school children should be developed and implemented immediately.

# Call for Action

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We, the platform members,  
urge our Government and  
its allied bodies -  
Ministry of Health, Ministry  
of Education, Ministry  
of Youth, Department of  
Education, Curriculum  
Development Center,  
National Center for  
Educational Development,  
Youth Council at all levels  
to fulfill the following  
and; youth activists and  
advocates, civil society  
organizations, media and  
young people to support  
the Government to :

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# 1. Provide each and every young person with age appropriate comprehensive sexuality education in schools

## SITUATION ANALYSIS

Plethora of literatures exist that highlight the importance of teaching comprehensive sexuality education to young people, and the result have shown that integrating CSE in school curriculum enhances the quality of life of the individual for lifetime. According to data from World Bank, European countries tend to have the lowest rate of teen pregnancies, and progressive approach to sexuality education has been accounted for this.<sup>1</sup>

Sexuality education was formally introduced in the school curriculum in Nepal for students of class 9 and 10 in 2003, as a mandatory lesson under Environment, Population and Health subject. Though it was a milestone, it was far from being comprehensive and age appropriate. With decade long advocacy effort of civil society organizations, an attempt to make it comprehensive and age appropriate led the curriculum to be amended in 2013 to include the subjects for class 6, 7 and 8 as well.<sup>2</sup>

However, the current curriculum still has several structural and implementation challenges. The curriculum is not age appropriate yet, as bulk of the course is introduced in class 9, when the students would have already known much more from other sources than

the course book, or have already gone through experiences, Eg: menstruation. The curriculum focuses on reproductive aspect more than the sexual health and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) based life skills aspects. Also, it does not include adequately about where to refer to for further information, nor does it promote discussing SRHR at home with parents or siblings. The public schools usually do not go beyond what is in the curriculum, though some private schools have made an effort to include several topics out of the syllabus as well.<sup>2</sup> According to the research conducted by International Planned Parenthood Federation in 2016/17, both young people and service providers emphasized that they are in need of access to more comprehensive,

**International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) defines CSE as a rights-based approach to equip young people with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values they need to determine and enjoy their sexuality – physically and emotionally, individually and in relationships.**

relevant, and in depth advice and information.<sup>3</sup>

Through platforms such as CSE Technical Working Committee formed by UNFPA (United National Fund for Population Activities), CSE Advocacy Group formed by FPAN (Family Planning Association of Nepal), and Right Here Right Now platform, civil society have been advocating for comprehensive sexuality education at schools from class 3 to 12. There is a demand for the revised curriculum that includes 6 component (a. Family life education (FLE), b. Population education, c. Sex and relationships education, d. SRH education and e. Life skills education, and f. Sexuality education) of comprehensive 6 different subjects – namely, Moral sexuality education distributed over Science, Social Studies, Health and Physical Education and Environment, Population and Health.

Also the teachers' training guide and teachers reading materials has been formulated for public school

which are included in the curriculum of Education Training Centers.<sup>4</sup>

However, the big challenge is that the curriculum is only revised every five years and thus there is a chance of missed opportunity to include emerging issues with respect to life skills of young people's sexuality and SRH.

Nepal is a signatory of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and has been an active supporter of it. Nepal has endorsed the ICPD beyond 2014 review document, where the need for CSE is highlighted,<sup>5</sup> making it important for policy makers to fulfill the commitment they have made at the international level.

As such, there is a pressing need to provide age appropriate comprehensive sexuality education in schools to ensure that sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people is adequately addressed.



## Call for Action

Though the current curriculum is progressive, there are gaps and inadequacies that need to be fulfilled immediately. We urge the Curriculum Development Center to address these gaps immediately to make the curriculum comprehensive and age appropriate as per the IPPF guidelines. Besides the current curriculum for class 6-10, it should be expanded to include students of class 3-5 and 11-12 as well.

## 2. Develop the capacity of teachers to deliver the CSE curriculum effectively and monitor it by strengthening monitoring mechanisms.

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### SITUATION ANALYSIS

Though sexuality education is a mandatory subject in school, the teachers often do not have enough capacity to deliver to youth the information they need to make informed choices about their sexual health and life. Some schools argue that sex education causes more harm compared to benefits; the innocence of children might be affected because of sex education as they have a curiosity to explore things and even their body which could lead into unusual circumstances.<sup>1</sup> A study conducted in Kathmandu suggested that students' needs and expectations regarding HIV and sexual health education are not being met through their schools.<sup>7</sup> The subject matter is usually skipped by the teachers and the students are asked to review it on their own, or taught with boys and girls separately, or taught only to boys during girls' only holidays.

This raises a serious question regarding the quality and capacity of the teachers to deliver lectures on

such life skills based subject. A monitoring mechanism is in place, that sends Government resource persons to each school to comprehensively assess their teaching ability and attendance, but no monitoring framework exists to assess the quality of materials delivered during CSE classes. In order to ensure quality delivery, a monitoring mechanism is a pressing need. Also, frequent change of teachers and the issue being directly related to life skills, there is a need to continuously provide refresher training as well.

Also currently, the teachers training is being done through initiatives of civil society organizations, that is not able to cover the training for all the teachers. One of the Vice District Education Officer expressed that he neither provides nor knows about any formal training for the teachers on CSE.<sup>8</sup>



### Call for Action

The teacher's training is crucial for effective delivery of CSE. In fact, building teacher capacity to deliver age-appropriate CSE, is proven to support the development of learners' life skills. Thus, we stress on the importance of stronger teacher training programs at all levels, that is owned by the Government.

### 3. Provide each and every young people who are out of school with age appropriate comprehensive sexuality education

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#### SITUATION ANALYSIS

The current effort of the Government has been majorly focused on providing CSE to in school children. However, the more vulnerable groups of out of school children are still left out.

According to a flash report 2012-2013 published by the Ministry of Education, only 69.4 percent of the students enrolled in grade 1 make it to grade 8. According to the Nepal Living Standard Survey (NLSS) 2010/2011, the percentage of population aged 6 years and above that never attended school is a staggering 34 percent, and this problem is not limited to rural areas.<sup>9</sup>

The out of school children are usually more vulnerable to early marriage, adolescent birth, and limited access to sexual and reproductive health services that lead to life threatening conditions. They are at double trouble because, firstly limited education opportunities curbs them from several life opportunities, and limited access to CSE leads them to problems related to deciding on their life, marriage, children, reproduction and sexuality. There have been efforts to provide alternative education to school drop-out children. Center for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) is running Chelibeti Siksha Karyekram (Girls Education Program) and also provides short term

as well as long term courses to school drop-outs. With respect to CSE, gender inclusion and workplace violence are included in these courses. A model related to gender roles and violence is being implemented which currently are not included in study credit hours. Teachers who later are supposed to teach their students are oriented.<sup>10</sup>

Ministry of Youth's Youth Information Centers in all 75 districts and employment generating skills based trainings by civil societies are some of the examples of attempts to provide alternative education. District Education Office organizes door to door program at the start of



**The out of school children are usually more vulnerable to early marriage, adolescent birth, and limited access to sexual and reproductive health services that lead to life threatening conditions.**

academic year to encourage students to take admission in school.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in collaboration with Department of Women and Children conducts Social and Financial Skills Package (Rupantaran) in 19 districts of Nepal engaging adolescent girls; providing them with practical skills and knowledge on gender equality, human rights, reproductive health, gender based violence, etc.<sup>11</sup> Non Formal Education Center (NFEC) provides literacy opportunities (4 months course) for school drop-outs aged 15 and above, mostly participated by females through community learning centers established in all the districts of country. However, only general information in regards to CSE is provided.<sup>12</sup> While few learning

options are available for the out of school children, majority of efforts are directed towards the school children.

These alternative education efforts could be a gateway to providing CSE to out of school children. However, in the situation where the curriculum for out of school children is lacking, the first step towards availing out of school children with their right to SRHR would be to develop a curriculum targeted to them.

## Case Story

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Archana Dahal, 14 years from Kathmandu shared that she had her first menstruation at the age of 11, the time when she was the only girl in her class to have started menstruating. Since she had lost her mother at early age, she didn't know whom to talk to about it. She was shy to talk to her father or younger brother, and could not receive information from friends who were as ignorant as her. She use to have severe cramps and did not know what to do about it. Two years later she learnt in school that mild exercise or using hot water bag would have easily reduced her pain. She hopes that she had known this earlier so that she did not have to suffer two years of pain.<sup>13</sup>



## Call for Action

The government should mobilize alternative education as a gateway to providing CSE to out of school students. A curriculum tailored for out of school children should be developed and implemented immediately.

# Case Story

Nirmal Jung Shahi (name changed), 21 years old from Mugu, left his schooling at class 7. His mom left him when he was just 6 years old, and because there were only three brothers in the family, two of them younger than him, the responsibility to serve his family came in the shoulder of Nirmal. Though he started taking the responsibility quite early, he was able to study till class 7 because of improved provision for preventing drop out among students of Karnali region. But when he knew that he has to appear for board exams in class 8, he decided to leave education. Nirmal got married 3 years later, and had to face problems like not being able to communicate about sexual relationship or family planning with his wife, was not clear about various methods of family planning, or knew that his wife also seeked pleasure as much as him. If he needed any information, his friends would be his much of the information. Now that he has been married for almost 8 years and knows many things by doing, he laughs that many information he had earlier were myth. Furthermore, in the absence of any vocational training or other provision for CSE for out of school children, Nirmal has to struggle to receive correct and adequate information even today.<sup>14</sup>

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