



IFMSA

International Federation of
Medical Students' Associations

IFMSA Policy Statement Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Adopted by the 65th March Meeting General Assembly in St. Paul's Bay, Malta, March 2016

Summary

IFMSA recognize that access to high quality, Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) is a right of young people. We further acknowledge that CSE provides young people with the opportunity to protect themselves from potential adverse sexual, reproductive and mental health outcomes.

Therefore, we the IFMSA, urge countries to provide CSE for all young people and recommend CSE programs be implemented as one of the main ways to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health for all in the Sustainable Development Agenda. IFMSA supports members in their work providing and advocating for CSE provision, locally, nationally and internationally.

Introduction

Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) is culturally relevant approach to teaching about sex and relationships that enables young people to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights and to make decisions about their health and sexuality. The term comprehensive emphasizes an approach to sexuality education that encompasses a diverse range of information, skills and values. [1]

A rights-based approach to Comprehensive Sexuality Education seeks 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. It views 'sexuality' holistically and within the context of emotional and social development. It recognizes that information alone is not enough. Young people need to be given the opportunity to acquire essential life skills and develop positive attitudes and values.”[2]

IFMSA acknowledges the affirmation of the 48th session of the Commission on Population and Development to properly enact its Programme of Action, which includes access to Comprehensive Sexuality Education for all young people.[3]

CSE is a fundamental component of a member states responsibility to uphold and respect Human Rights for young people. This concerns especially the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children and young people have the right to the highest attainable level of health, access to health facilities (Article 24), access to information that will allow them to make decisions about their health (Article 17), including family planning (Article 24). Young people also have the right to be heard, express opinions, and be involved in decision-making (Article 12). They have the right to education which will help them learn, develop and reach their full potential and prepare them to be tolerant towards others (Article 29) [4]



Alarmed by the continuing poor sexual and reproductive health outcomes amongst young people, especially noting the disproportionate incidence of HIV in those aged 15-24 years and the increased risk of maternal mortality in females under 15 years [5]

Recognizing that a comprehensive sexuality education leaves young people better prepared to make positive decisions regarding their sexual and reproductive health, and empowered to enact these choices [6]

Embracing that new Sustainable Development Goals agenda supports programmes that teach literacy, numeracy, human rights and life skills to vulnerable adolescent girls, and helps to develop and implement comprehensive sexuality education, which teaches young people about their bodies, health and disease prevention. [7]

Main text

We, the IFMSA,

1. Call for action for providers of sexuality education implement programmes that are receptive to the needs of young people and teaches young people about their bodies, health and disease prevention as well as relationships.
2. Urge all countries to ensure adequate provision of CSE to all young people, and to enshrine this right in national law and medical education curricula.
3. Encourage IFMSA members to advocate for the provision of high quality, CSE locally, nationally and internationally
4. Support the valuable work of IFMSA projects which seek to broaden access to CSE by providing student-led CSE programs within their own countries and communities
5. Mandate IFMSA delegations to high level meetings to advocate for the inclusion of CSE within International agreements
6. Call upon member states to honour their commitment to the Program of Action of International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the UN convention on the Rights of the Child and Sustainable Development Agenda
7. Strongly oppose any action by member states to restrict young people's access to education and information regarding their sexual and reproductive health

References

1. International Technical Guidelines on Sexuality Education, UNESCO/UNAIDS. www.unesco.org/new/en/hiv-and-aids/our-priorities-in-hiv/sexuality-education/international-technical-guidance-on-sexuality-education
2. IPPF Framework For Comprehensive Sexuality Education <http://ippf.org/resources/publications/ippf-framework-comprehensive-sexuality-education>
3. 48th session of Commission of Population and Development press release <http://www.unfpa.org/press/48th-session-commission-population-and-development>
4. A summary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child http://www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Publication-pdfs/betterlifeleaflet2012_press.pdf
5. WHO Bulletin on Young people, sexual and reproductive health and HIV <http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/87/11/08-059915/en/index.html>
6. UNFPA Operational Guidance for Comprehensive Sexuality Education - <http://www.unfpa.org/publications/unfpa-operational-guidance-comprehensive-sexuality-education#sthash.AoLxl2c9.dpuf>
7. UNFPA and Sustainable Development Goals



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