

# Adolescent Reproductive Health Education

## Son La, Vietnam

### Summary of the program

**Location:** Son La Province

**Target Population:** Adolescents in ethnic minority communities in Yen Chau & Thuan Chau Districts

#### Adolescent Reproductive Health:

- High rates of early pregnancy and child marriage
- Limited access to reproductive health services & information

#### Participatory Needs Assessment:

- To understand the specific issues within the community & the needs of adolescents
  - Secondary data review
  - Qualitative methods:
    - Focus group discussions & key informant interviews

#### Findings:

1. Acceptance of adolescent pregnancy
2. Afraid of “not being able to get married” due to age
3. Forced marriage in H’Mong communities
4. Local view that contraceptives are for married couples
5. Policies/Regulations related to early marriage are not uniformly implemented and enforced
6. Demand for more labor in the family; girls drop out of school
7. Knowledge of reproductive health is low
8. Numerous barriers to health information and services

#### Adolescent Reproductive Health Education Approach:

- Students selected and trained as facilitators; teachers provide support & guidance
- Teachers and schools provided with materials to conduct age-appropriate, factually-accurate lessons related to sexual & reproductive health and rights, including gender dynamics
- Edu-entertainment approach to community & school events

#### Knowledge and attitudes:

- ✓ Basic reproductive biology & physiology
- ✓ Pregnancy & contraception
- ✓ Gender dynamics and inequality
- ✓ Beliefs, attitudes, barriers among boys and girls

#### Practices & skills:

- ✓ How to use contraceptive methods
- ✓ Joint decision-making skills
- ✓ Negotiation skills

## Collaboration of stakeholders:

- Fostered strong partnerships with local school & community stakeholders
- Enabled the intervention to address an otherwise taboo topic
- Teachers were eager to support their students; support from health-system stakeholders
- Engaged leaders and adults in the wider community

## Results:

- 18 months of implementation
- Outputs: 1000s of adolescents engaged; 600+ teacher engagements; 600+ parent engagements
- 35 events in schools; 68 events in community
- Pre/post testing of participants
- YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jqpwa-pS1hM&feature=youtu.be>

**Quantitative:** some results were statistically significant, examples:

- % of adolescents who could list three types of contraceptive methods (pre: 44.1%, post: 59.3%, p=value=0.019).
- % of adolescents knowing correct condom use (pre: 0%, post: 26.5%, p-value=0.000).

**Qualitative:**

- Teachers expressed improved confidence discussing reproductive health topics with students
- District Education Department interested in having more teachers trained on adolescent reproductive health
- Students thoroughly enjoyed the education events and expressed improved understanding of reproductive health topics & increased confident talking about the subject with their partners
- A Father's Story: <https://healthbridge.ca/news/entry/an-enlightened-father-results-from-the-arh-events>

## Challenges & Lessons Learned:

- Challenges with the edu-entertainment format, lots of fun but harder for students to focus on key messages
  - Facilitators should provide more structure
- In the future, more focus on key messages & time for discussion/reflection
- Strengthen gender & human-rights focus

## Next Steps:

- ✓ Strengthen collaboration between education & health sector stakeholders
- ✓ Support need for reproductive health services for adolescents
- ✓ Move towards a Comprehensive Sexuality Education model

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