



Delivering Comprehensive Sexuality  
Education for Out-of-school Young People

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# COUNTRY CASE STUDIES ON UNFPA'S GLOBAL PROGRAMME ON OUT-OF-SCHOOL CSE

## Nigeria

## The Country Case studies series is developed by UNFPA based on outcomes of the Global Programme on Out-of-School Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE).

UNFPA has since 2019 led the programme “Comprehensive Sexuality Education for Out-of-school Young People: Reaching Those Most Left Behind”, with the aim of empowering adolescents and youth from specific groups left behind with the information and skills they need to make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health and rights. The programme is funded by the governments of Norway and Spain, and started its second phase in 2022. The programme implementation takes place in a total of 12 countries – Colombia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Iran, Malawi, Moldova, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Palestine, Philippines and Tunisia.

Out-of-school CSE holds the promise of reaching those left behind. In each of the countries, locally adapted interventions consider the needs, life experiences and vulnerabilities of left-behind groups of young people. This includes young people who are vulnerable either because they cannot attend school, or because the sexuality education curriculum offered in school does not adequately address their unique needs, whether that be young key populations or a young person with a disability, a young person living with HIV, or a migrant or young person displaced by conflict or humanitarian crisis. The initiative reaches out to young people from left-behind populations using the specially developed UN International Technical and Programmatic Guidance on Out-of-school Sexuality Education. Youth engagement is an integral part of the programme, and young people are themselves meaningfully included and engaged in the design and implementation of the activities.

In this Country Case studies series we present the experiences and lessons learned from UNFPA’s work at the country level implementing CSE to meet the needs of young people most left behind.



**Nigeria**

# REACHING OUT-OF-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS



**TARGET GROUP:**

Out-of-school adolescents and youth



**IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS:**

Lagos State Ministry of Youth and Social Development, Lagos State Vocational and Technical Board, Lagos State Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation

In 2018, the Lagos state government, with funding from UBRAF (UNAIDS' Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework), began integrating comprehensive sexuality education into non-formal educational settings, to address gaps in sexual and reproductive health outcomes and sexual and gender-based violence among out-of-school youth. Between 2018 and 2022 the programme was rolled out in 13 non-formal educational settings – five technical schools and eight vocational schools – which build the skills of a large population of out-of-school young people.

Crucially, implementation has been led by young people themselves. These include Youth Advocates – who are selected and trained yearly by the state Ministry of Youth and Social Development to represent the interests of young people in local government – and the Lagos Youth Parliament, whose House Committee on Education and Culture moved a motion on the integration of CSE into non-formal educational settings. This translated into a policy document that was passed by the state House of Assembly through the Ministries of Youth and Women affairs.

Implementation was done in five phases, beginning with a multi-stakeholder meeting led by young people to discuss the inclusion of CSE in the vocational and technical training curriculum, and the establishment of a multi-sectoral CSE task force to guide implementation. The task force comprised Youth Advocates, the chair and secretary of the Youth Parliament, representatives of the Ministries of Youth, Women Affairs, Education, and Information, representatives of the Vocational and Technical Board, UNFPA, UNESCO, and youth-led organizations. In the second phase, the



task force conducted a desk review and landscaping to identify the priority sexual and reproductive health needs of out-of-school youth in the state. Next, the team used the SERAT (Sexuality Education Review and Assessment Tool) to draft a CSE curriculum and instructors' manual to guide implementation in non-formal educational settings. In the fourth phase, the curriculum was validated by the multi-sectoral stakeholders and the task force, led by the Youth Advocates. Thirteen centres for implementing CSE were identified, instructors were selected and trained with the manual, classes commenced in the centres, and the ministries and UNFPA continued to engage the instructors and principals during supportive supervisory visits to the centres and review meetings. The fifth phase was drafting tools to evaluate the intervention.

## Successes

The first phase led to ownership and commitment by the State Youth Parliament, the Ministries of Youth and Women Affairs, and the Vocational and Technical Board, and to legislative approval for the integration of CSE in non-formal educational settings. The second phase resulted in a CSE policy brief and roadmap. The third and fourth phases led to the completion of the nine-month CSE curriculum with eight modules and an instructors' manual with 28 topics, which

were printed and disseminated. Finally, evaluation tools were printed, including questionnaires and a checklist to assess the increase in students' knowledge on life skills and sexual and reproductive health, and their uptake of related services. Since inception, almost 8,000 out-of-school adolescents and young people aged 15-35 years have gone through the programme, around three-quarters of whom were female and one-quarter male.

## Challenges

The programme has faced several challenges. At three of the technical and vocational schools, principals who had initially engaged with the programme later opposed the introduction of CSE, and there was opposition from local opinion leaders and parents too, leading to poor acceptance of CSE at those institutions. An insufficient number of instructors have been trained to cover the high number of student intakes in the last two years, and although they have the curriculum materials, they lack some general classroom aids. Despite values clarification during training, some instructors find it difficult and uncomfortable to teach topics such as sex and contraception. Limited access to computers and the Internet makes it difficult for tutors to look for aids to improve their and their students' understanding of topics. Inadequate time is allocated for teaching the thematic areas, so some teachers continue with sessions via WhatsApp outside regular hours, which some parents or caregivers disapprove of. Other resource issues include a lack of access to non-judgmental and high-quality sexual and reproductive health services for out-of-school young people when they are referred to nearby primary health centres. Programme participants have asked for safe spaces or hubs where they can express themselves,



have fun and access services, but the programme has not been able to provide this for them. Finally, the CSE programme in Lagos does not have the resources to scale up to reach out-of-school adolescents or youth with disabilities, who are a particularly vulnerable group.



## Context

In 2003, Nigeria adopted a new national sexuality education curriculum, Family Life and HIV Education (FLHE), in response to the growing HIV epidemic. By 2011, FLHE was operational in all 36 of Nigeria's states. The curriculum has recently been reviewed by the Nigerian Educational, Research and Development Council, with technical and financial support from UNESCO and other partners, and the revised edition awaits the approval of the National Council on Education. However, Nigeria currently has no national CSE curriculum for young people who are out of school. This is a critical issue because it is estimated that more than 18 million of the country's children are out of school.

Despite support from government and civil-society organizations, sociocultural and religious norms, together with some public opposition, constitute barriers to the acceptance of education on sexuality and sexual and reproductive health for adolescents and young people in Nigeria. Policymakers and community leaders, concerned about public support, are often reluctant to push for CSE, while teachers are often unprepared or unwilling to discuss sensitive topics in the classroom. In recent times the media have been used by those opposed to CSE to spread disinformation about it. Many parents fear that sexuality education can contribute to early sexual activity.



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