



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**

## **Palestine**

## 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 identity, whether that be as a girl, a young person with a disability, a young person living with HIV, an LGBTQ+ young person, 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 Comprehensive 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.



Palestine

# MAJD: A VIRTUAL AMBASSADOR FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND BOYS IN PALESTINE



**TARGET GROUP:**

Adolescents aged  
12-18 years



**GOVERNMENT  
PARTNERS:**

Ministry of Education



**IMPLEMENTING  
PARTNERS:**

Sharek Youth Forum, Save Youth  
Future Society, Burj Al Laqlaq

UNFPA, in collaboration with its NGO partners, has developed an educational tool that uses a virtual character named “Majd”, a 12-year-old adolescent boy and girl (Majd is a unisex name in Arabic, meaning “glory”). Majd is incorporated into materials for young people to convey positive and healthy behaviours and attitudes to peers, promote gender equality, and combat gender-based violence. Majd is designed as a culturally sensitive tool for comprehensive sexuality education both in and out of school, providing accurate and relatable information to young people in a way that is sensitive to their cultural and social context.

Majd’s journey began in 2018 with the creation of the “Brave Student Majd Diary”, developed by experts working with young people to raise boys’ and girls’ awareness on gender roles and responsibilities and serve as a tool for CSE in a friendly and easy-to-learn approach. The diary follows the adolescent journey from the ages of 12 to 18, exploring the common challenges at each age. More than 220 teachers and counsellors have been trained to use the diary and to lead discussion in classrooms. Students are encouraged to use the diary at home to start discussions on roles and gender perceptions with their siblings and parents. This approach supports parents in educating and communicating with their children about navigating the transition to adulthood.

An electronic version of the Majd Diary, the Majd mobile app, includes interactive games, materials on digital security, animated videos and awareness-raising posters. It is currently being used by more than 1,500 adolescents. A Majd

YouTube channel and Facebook page present educational videos and posters on sexual and reproductive health and rights, and gender-based violence. These online platforms also allow adolescents to share their own experiences, ask questions and connect with each other, and counsellors across schools to cooperate on joint initiatives. Summer and winter Majd camps in and out of schools have reached more than 5,000 adolescents, including those with disabilities. First-aid psychosocial support (PSS) initiatives distributed PSS and hygiene kits after the political escalations in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. The camps provided a safe and supportive environment for adolescents to debrief and cope with the traumatic events they have experienced.

In 2022, UNFPA rolled out “Majd – the Brave Male Adolescent” in 20 schools and 10 Ministry of Social Development rehabilitation centres for out-of-school boys. This iteration of Majd focuses on encouraging positive masculinity and gender equality. Student parliament members were trained and toured marginalized communities, raising awareness about positive masculinity, gender-based violence and child marriage. Subsequently, adolescent-led initiatives promoted human rights, engaged parents on non-violence and healthy relationships, established a school radio programme, and distributed pamphlets and banners to combat violence against women, with a focus on girls’ right to education.



## Successes

Majd has demonstrated a positive impact in providing CSE and promoting gender equality among young people in Palestine. The programme has reached more than 30,000 adolescents, teachers and parents both in and out of school, and has been adopted in 24 schools in East Jerusalem, the

West Bank and Gaza, with 20,000 followers on the Facebook page, and 1,000 active users of the Majd mobile app benefiting from CSE through games and challenges. Majd is now one of the nationally adopted tools in the adolescent health teacher and counsellor manual.

## Challenges

Several challenges have been faced. Despite the Palestinian government's commitment to incorporate CSE into all schools by 2030, it has not prioritized financing CSE or enacting relevant policies. In addition, in recent years Palestine has seen a growing conservative movement and increased opposition to gender equality and CSE. Some religious groups and community leaders have formed a coalition called "The Popular Movement Against CEDAW", which has organized social-media campaigns and visits to the Ministry of Education and schools to stop education

on gender equality and sexuality. This opposition has made it more challenging to implement CSE programmes. Meanwhile, many educators and parents still lack the information and skills to provide CSE. Finally, adolescent health has not been well integrated into the health system, despite the existence of a specialized protocol and unit in the Ministry of Health. Ongoing support is needed to develop health-care practitioners' capacities to provide gender- and age-appropriate information and services on sexual and reproductive health, and to increase demand for these.



## Context

Palestine is a youthful society: two-thirds of the population is under 30, including 1.5 million adolescents aged 10-19. Challenges facing young people include the lack of a supportive political, social and economic environment, limited access to knowledge, information and services, and exposure to violence and trauma from the ongoing occupation and political conflict. Adolescent girls and boys often face gender-specific barriers to accessing their rights and opportunities for education, physical and mental health, safety, social connections and citizenship. Without adequate information and access to sexual and reproductive health services, adolescents – particularly

girls – are vulnerable to unsafe practices, early marriage and pregnancy, gender-based violence, and an inability to seek help. UNFPA has supported a national protocol to integrate adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health in primary health care through a specialized unit that is currently overseeing six clinics as a pilot. UNFPA has also supported the updating of the national adolescent health manual for teachers and counsellors, with training of trainers carried out in more than 40 schools. Since 2018, youth-friendly health services centres have been established in five universities, providing CSE programmes for youth, including pre-marriage awareness interventions.



**United Nations Population Fund**

605 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10158  
+1 212 297 5000  
[www.unfpa.org](http://www.unfpa.org)

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**To get in touch with the UNFPA CSE Team,  
Regional and Country Focal Points:**

**Ilya Zhukov,**

Global CSE Focal Point, UNFPA Headquarters — [zhukov@unfpa.org](mailto:zhukov@unfpa.org)

**Petar Mladenov,**

Programme Analyst, UNFPA Headquarters — [pmladenov@unfpa.org](mailto:pmladenov@unfpa.org)

**Kristine Bjartnes,**

Programme Analyst, UNFPA Headquarters — [bjartnes@unfpa.org](mailto:bjartnes@unfpa.org)

**Olfa Lazreg,**

Programme Specialist, Youth & HIV, Arab States Regional Office — [lazreg@unfpa.org](mailto:lazreg@unfpa.org)

**Sima Alami,**

Programme Analyst/ Youth, UNFPA Palestine Country Office — [alami@unfpa.org](mailto:alami@unfpa.org)