

Abstract

THPE0836 - Working with teachers to develop locally appropriate teaching materials in the MEMA kwa Vijana programme in Mwanza, Tanzania

M. Makokha¹, G. Mmassy¹, J. Komrower², A. Obasi³, F. Mohammed¹, J. Changalucha²

¹*African Medical and Research Foundation, Mwanza, Tanzania,* ²*National Institute of Medical Research, Mwanza, Tanzania,* ³*Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, Liverpool, United Kingdom*

Issues: There is acute need for good teaching materials to guide teachers in their pivotal role in scaling up the education sector HIV/AIDS response. Participatory teaching techniques are widely recommended, however, developing locally appropriate materials is a lengthy and costly process often hampered by poor knowledge, attitudes and skills in adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH).

Description: As part of MEMA kwa Vijana Phase 1 (MkV1) an innovative reproductive health package of teacher-led, peer-assisted classroom sessions was developed in collaboration with primary school teachers in Mwanza, Tanzania. One teachers' guide was used in 1999 to teach classes 5, 6 and 7. This was developed, pre-tested and piloted by a multidisciplinary team led by AMREF, a non-governmental organization (NGO). Brief questionnaires completed after each session were analyzed alongside supervision reports and discussed during an end-year teachers' evaluation workshop. Progressive engagement with users' perspective within this rigorously evaluated programme produced three separate guides for each class used in 2001 combining technical accuracy with local appropriateness.

Lessons learned:

- Teachers' guides need to draw on users' perspective over time to incorporate their experience and ensure local appropriateness.
- Training and guidance in interactive forms of teaching improves teachers' confidence and motivation to use them. However, simulation exercises have been conceptually difficult for teachers to master.
- Local art forms have been popular and powerful media for pupils to engage with and share messages they learn in class.
- Alternative viewpoints (e.g. teaching about condom) may be accommodated in the same guide and left to the school's discretion. However, positive discussion of youth sexuality remains controversial.

Recommendations: High-quality locally appropriate teachers' guides are an invaluable investment in scaling up the education sector response. Their uptake and adaptation should be promoted at nationally and Regional levels.