

## Rationale

There are 235 million people living in India between the ages of 10 and 19. Among young women ages of 25 to 49, 20 % have had sexual intercourse before they were 15 years old and 55 % before the age of 18. By the time they are 18 years old, 28 % of Indian women will have given birth to a child, and 49% will have been married.

Of roughly 2.5 million people currently infected with HIV & AIDS, over 50 % of all new HIV infections take place among young adults between 15-24 years, and 40% of all cases of sexually transmitted infections occur within the same age group .

The Population Council Survey 'Youth in India; Situation and Needs (2006-2007)', a pan-Indian study conducted in both rural and urban areas in the states of Bihar, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu shows that:

■ Awareness about contraceptive use and HIV & AIDS is universal but in-depth knowledge remains limited.

■ Only 15% of young people have access to information from parents and teachers on any sort of sexuality education; however a large percentage of youth were in favour of being provided with such information.

■ A large majority have had some form of physical intimacy with partners before marriage, while gender differences in reporting pre-marital sex were high; 47% men and 26% women reported having had sex with their romantic partner.

■ Condom usage was again seen to be limited, with just 13% men and 3% women reporting consistent condom use.

■ Disturbingly, 33% women and 6% men reported pre-marital sex as being non-consensual through force or persuasion.

■ Even after marriage, the vulnerability to sexual risk remains and condom use within marriage was also limited.

The YP Foundation's peer education work has shown that for many young people, concepts of the self, body and identity lie at the centre of much confusion and that this is compounded by the uncertainty of their position in society and what their entitlements and roles in regards to issues of sexuality, health and gender are. Young people today face increasing pressures regarding their bodies, sexuality and health particularly by way of conflicting norms and messages. On the one hand society projects messages of sexuality as being negative, associated with fear guilt and disease, while on the other hand it is seen as positive or desirable by media and peer groups .

The ban on Adolescent Education Programme (AEP) in which young people and adolescents are equipped with skills to negotiate life decisions regarding sexuality during school years, in seven states of India has meant that large numbers of young people are being denied their rights to information and are being discriminated against and not being provided information that is important to their lives.

<sup>1</sup>Nirantar, Sexuality Education Series, Part 1.

<sup>2</sup>2008 National Aids Control Organization's Adolescent Education Programme.

<sup>3</sup>IPPF CSE Framework.

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Know

Your

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## About The YP Foundation

"The YP Foundation is a youth run and led organization that supports and enables young people to create programmes and influence policies in the areas of gender, sexuality, health, education, the arts & governance. The organization promotes, protects and advances young people's human rights by building leadership, and strengthening youth led initiatives and movements. Founded in 2002, we have worked over the last 8 years directly with 5,000 young people to set up over 200 projects in India, reaching out to 300,000 young people."

Know Your Body Know Your Rights (KYBKRY) - The Peer Education Programme

Conceptualised as the Project 19 Programme in 2006, KYBKRY is a 2 year long peer education programme project focused on training young people over a period of 4-6 months to become Peer Facilitators on the issue of Sexuality, Rights, Health and HIV & AID. The work so far has involved multiple people and mediums such as film, theatre, music, photography, communication and facilitative workshops.

The programme urges young people to make informed choices and regarding their bodies, sexuality, rights, health, and relationships, enabling them to lead happier lives; it also encourages them to be respectful of all people's rights, and of the choices that they make.

## Activity Overview

■ An open-house workshop series conducted in Delhi, by a team of 15 young people who have been trained as Peer Educators, encouraging frank and non-judgmental conversation, about issues related to young people's bodies, sexuality, rights and health with the emphasis on correct information as well as communicating such information in a comfortable, fun and non-intimidating manner.

■ Writing and publishing of a Peer to Peer Training Manual on Sexual Reproductive Health Rights and HIV & AIDS as well as Development of research case studies, films and other such creative mediums to spread awareness about issues relating to sexuality, gender, health, rights and HIV & AIDS.

■ A peer education report on the outcomes of Project 19, a peer-to-peer community programme, disseminating information on understanding young people's sexuality, gender, rights and health. (2009 – 2010)

■ Engagement with national, regional and local advocacy by lobbying for Comprehensive Sexuality Education and with the Adolescent Education Programme (AEP) through conferences and consultations during the past 3 years.

■ The Project 19 Festival is an annual national-level festival which facilitates bringing together young people from diverse backgrounds to interact and exchange ideas and experiences on issues of sexuality, rights and HIV & AIDS.

The Project has partnered with, and has been supported by, a range of organisations since inception some of these are TARSHI, CHP, IWHC, NACO, Punj Lloyd, Government of Nagaland, UNESCO, UNICEF, IPPF SARO, Ford Foundation and Moserbaer amongst others.

## Focus from 2010-2012

As part of the advocacy and awareness initiative, we are conducting a 2 week- long festival, called the 'Know your Body Know Your Rights Festival' in July 2010 which will bring together young people to advocate for young people's sexual rights as a human right and advocate for Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) with key stakeholders. Components of the programme include:

■ Making concepts of sexuality and rights more accessible to the general public and carrying forward the peer education programme through different creative mediums, with a wider outreach.

■ Beginning dialogue with key stakeholders such as school teachers, and curriculum setters on why CSE is a right.

■ Capacity building and experience sharing amongst organisations and individuals working in different areas within sexuality, gender, health and rights with young people.

## Key Principles

■ Affirm that it is important to talk about sexuality.

■ Affirm that sexuality and expression of sexuality is intrinsic to each individual.

■ Recognize that sexuality is a normal and important part of all people's lives and while different people have different understandings and ways of expressing their sexuality, all people should experience their bodies and sexuality in a positive and fulfilling manner.

■ That every person has the right to access information services relating to sexual rights and health irrespective of any other considerations.

■ Recognize that gender is a fluid concept and gender roles are based on narrow societal constructs. Every individual has the right to choose and ascribe to different gender and/or sexual identities.

■ Respect, and not violate, other people's bodies and personal spaces, laying emphasis on the importance of consent in relationships.

■ Recognize that different people have different body types and address existing stereotypes relating to body types, sexuality and notions of what is attractive.

■ Respect our bodies and take proper care with respect to nutrition, exercise, sexual health and get regular health checkups.

■ Recognize the importance of accessing the correct information from reliable sources, leading to informed decision making.