



Knowledge hub
-
Collection of best practices

Summary of the best practice

1. Title of the best practice (e.g. name of policy, programme, project, etc.) *

Comprehensive Sexuality Education

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

South Africa

3. Please select the **most relevant** Action Track(s) the best practice applies to *

- Action Track 1. Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools
- Action Track 2. Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development
- Action Track 3. Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession
- Action Track 4. Digital learning and transformation
- Action Track 5. Financing of education

4. Implementation lead/partner organization(s) *

Department of Basic Education

5. Key words (5-15 words): Please add key descriptive words around aims, modalities, target groups etc. *

Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE); Scripted Lesson Plans; Advocacy; Adolescents and Young People; Educators, Early Unintended Pregnancies; Gender-based Violence

6. What makes it a best practice? *

Empowers young people to be make informed decisions and live healthy reproductive lives while attaining positive educational outcomes

Description of the best practice

7. Introduction (350-400 words)

This section should ideally provide the context of, and justification for, the practice and address the following issues:

- i) Which population was affected?
- ii) What was the problem that needed to be addressed?
- iii) Which approach was taken and what objectives were achieved? *

South Africa continues to face challenges of high HIV infections, high rates of early and unintended pregnancies, gender-based violence (GBV) and risky behaviours among adolescents and young people. These are among the barriers which impact negatively to the country's progress towards the realization of inclusive and quality education for all learners. To strengthen its response and to address barriers to learning and enhance the country's fight against HIV, early and unintended pregnancy (EUP) and gender-based violence (GBV), South Africa introduced Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in the Life Orientation Curriculum in 2000. The introduction of CSE seeks to provide learners (adolescents and young people) in schools with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that will empower them to make informed decisions regarding their sexuality and sexual reproductive health. In order to strengthen the response to the rising numbers of new HIV infections, EUP and GBV, in 2011 the country reviewed the CSE content in the curriculum against the UN International Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE, 2009). This review was aimed at comparing the country's CSE against international best practice and identifying gaps in the curriculum.

8. Implementation (350-450 words)

Please describe the implementation modalities or processes, where possible in relation to:

- i) What are the main activities carried out?
- ii) When and where the activities were carried out (including the start date and whether it is ongoing)?
- iii) Who were the key implementation actors and collaborators? (civil society organizations, private sector, foundations, coalitions, networks etc.)?
- iv) What were the resources needed (budget and sources) for the implementation?

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The CSE review process led to the adoption of the Scripted Lesson Plans (SLPs) approach to augment the CSE content that was found lacking in the SA curriculum. The Scripted Lesson Plans were developed to provide educators with quality standardized content to deliver CSE in the classroom. In addition, the SLPs provided educators with ready-made lessons with clear guidelines on covering some of the most difficult and sensitive topics. The CSE SLPs were finalised in 2018 and were piloted in over 1700 schools from 5 Provinces in South Africa. To ensure effective implementation of the SLPs the department followed an ecological implementation model that is centered around the learner and facilitated buy-in from the different levels in the education system.

Enhancing Policy Implementation Framework and development of SLPs for CSE implementation
In 2017, the DBE developed and promulgated the DBE National Policy on HIV, STIs and TB for Learners, Educators, School Support Staff and Officials in all Primary and Secondary Schools in the Basic Education Sector, 2017. The Policy makes provision for the implementation of CSE in the classroom while creating linkages to sexual reproductive health services and is aligned to the National Strategic Plan on HIV, TB, and STIs (NSP 2017-2022). The NSP recognizes the implementation of CSE as a game-changer in empowering adolescents and young people. In this regard, the DBE developed a set of 80 SLPs for Grade 4-12 covering the identified topics based on the CSE review. These were finalised and approved in 2019 for implementation in school.

IMPLEMENTATION MODEL

1. Advocacy of School Communities and external stakeholders on the implementation of CSE SLPs in schools

To facilitate buy-in of all education stakeholders in the implementation of strengthened CSE in the classroom, the DBE embarked on a country-wide advocacy drive. Using the printed advocacy materials, the DBE with the support of partners conducted orientation of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and School Management Teams on the developed SLPs. Parents were also sensitized using parent advocacy materials. Engagement of SGBs and parents on the development of CSE SLPs was critical for transforming education to be responsive by all role-players. This also addressed the myths and misconception regarding parents and equipped the parents to support learners beyond the classroom. Furthermore, at the height of CSE opposition in South Africa the DBE conducted national consultations with key educational stakeholders including Religious and Traditional Leaders; Teacher Unions, School Governing Body Associations and young people, clarifying the government position on CSE as well as policy framework for the support of CSE implementation.

2. Capacity Building of Curriculum Developers, Heads of Departments, Subject Advisors and Educators

In order to strengthen institutionalization of the Scripted Lesson Plans, the DBE trained Curriculum Developers, Chief Education Specialists and Life Orientation/Life Skills Subject Advisors as Trainers.

9. Results – outputs and outcomes (250-350 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the questions below:

- i) How was the practice identified as transformative? (e.g., impact on policies, impact on management processes, impact on delivery arrangements or education monitoring, impact on teachers, learners and beneficiary communities etc.);
- ii) What were the concrete results achieved with regard to outputs and outcomes?
- iii) Has an assessment of the practice been carried out? If yes, what were the results? *

Political Buy-in

The approval of the DBE National Policy on HIV, STIs and TB which has been lauded as being progressive and ground-breaking has created an enabling environment for the provision of CSE through the curriculum. Not only has this Policy led to the strengthening of CSE implementation but has laid ground for creating schools as centers of health promotion as it also makes provision of sexual reproductive health services (SRHS) in schools. In order to operationalize the provision of SRHS, the DBE developed Standard Operating Procedures for provision of SRHS and Social Services in Secondary Schools (2019). These SOPs further strengthened the education sector policy framework for the transformation of education to be responsive to the needs of learners beyond the classroom.

Systems Strengthening

The capacity building for educators, curriculum developers, subject advisors enabled the DBE to address the challenges including content gaps, educators discomfort levels to teach CSE in the classroom. To support SLP implementation, the DBE developed teaching and learning materials which were distributed to the schools with trained educators on the enhanced CSE curriculum. In the schools implementing SLPs the DBE also engaged school management teams, school principals and SGBs on the developed SLPs to improve CSE delivery in the curriculum. Additionally, the implementation of advocacy and system strengthening activities ensured buy-in of key stakeholders for the effective implementation.

Advocacy and Consultation

The advocacy of external and internal stakeholders enabled the system to be ready for a wider implementation of CSE despite opposition that was experienced in the country in 2019. A mid-term review of the roll-out of the SLPs revealed that in the schools where orientation of School Governing Bodies, School Management Teams, and parents and educators trained there is improved implementation of SLPs and buy-in of CSE from all stakeholders.

Though South Africa continues to experience challenges with HIV infections, EUP and GBV, recent report of the Human Science Research Council (2018) showed a decline in HIV infections among adolescent and young women from 2000 per week in 2012 to 1300 in 2018. With regard to EUP among learners in school a slight decline was also noted from 99 000 in 2013 to 82 000 in 2016 according to the general household survey on schooling. The Covid-19 pandemic however has seen the country losing some of these gains as the recent statistics on deliveries among adolescent girls and young women between ages of 10-19 were reported to be 132 000 in 2021.

10. Lessons learnt (300 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the following questions:

- i) What were the key triggers for transformation?
- ii) What worked really well – what facilitated this?
- iii) What did not work – why did it not work? *

To transform education through implementation of sexuality education Scripted Lesson Plans, a strong policy implementation framework is critical. The enabling policy environment in the education system in South Africa for implementation of CSE paved a way to gaining political buy-in as well as ownership of the process by educational stakeholders.

The successful implementation of the sexuality education SLPs in the Life Orientation and Life Skills Curriculum required the mobilization and engagement of all education stakeholders including whole school communities including parents, the SGBs, School Management Teams and Educators.

To enable educators to improve delivery of the SLPs in the classroom, capacity building, provision of learning and teaching materials is a critical component. Prior to their training on the SLPs educators were uncomfortable to teach CSE content in the curriculum.

Retaining trained educators on SLPs enables the sustainability of educators with the required content to offer quality sexuality education. Thus enabling saturation of the system with educators who are able to support our learners with the required content.

Scripted Lesson Plans provide educators with a standardized content that boost their confidence in delivering CSE content that is otherwise perceived to be difficult and sensitive and mitigate educator bias in dealing with the sensitive topics in the curriculum.

Implementation of SLPs empowered learners to seek sexual reproductive, health and social services.

It is always critical to ensure ongoing engagement and consultation of all stakeholders to strengthen support for the implementation of CSE in and out of schools.

Though the SLPs have been integrated in the Life Orientation/ Life Skills curriculum and educators have been capacitated to implement in the classroom, due to limited resources the scale-up is yet to saturate the entire education system.

11. Conclusions (250 words)

Please describe why may this intervention be considered a “best practice”.

What recommendations can be made for those intending to adopt the documented “best practice” or how can it help people working on the same issue(s)? *

To implement quality CSE in the classroom requires a systematic approach. It is critical that all levels of the school community are involved to facilitate buy-in. A favorable policy framework is critical as a basis for engaging stakeholders on their mandate and to strengthen the position of government for the required implementation. Capacity building of implementers such as the Curriculum Developers, Subject advisors, School Management teams, School Governing Bodies and educators ensure successful implementation as it allows everyone to have a stake in the success of the intervention. In light of CSE detractors advocacy of all stakeholders is vital and ongoing consultation.

The capacitation of educators in SLPs empowers them with skills, abilities and knowledge that transformed teaching and learning in the classroom. The SLPs affords teachers with methodology and pedagogy to facilitate interactive learning. Furthermore, it enhanced the educator's comfort levels in addressing sensitive topics utilising the CSE SLP as educators do not have to search for information but use what is provided.

12. Further reading

Please provide a list and URLs of key reference documents for additional information on the “best practice” for those who may be interested in knowing how the results benefited the beneficiary group/s. *

DBE Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement on Life Orientation and Life Skills; DBE National Policy on HIV, STIs and TB (2017); National Strategic Plan (2017-2022); Impact Evaluation of a School-Based Sexuality and HIV Prevention Education Activity in South Africa (2018); DBE Sexuality Education Pamphlet, 2019