

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Ghana

**Comprehensive Sexuality Education and
Comprehensive Abortion Care**

Presented By:

DAVID EDEM KOMLAGAH



INTRODUCTION

Ghana's International commitments

- Ghana has ratified some major international human rights conventions. to advance SRHR including
 - ICPD commitments
 - UHC,
 - Beijing Platform for Action,
 - FP2030,
 - SDGs,
 - Maputo Protocol etc

However, better implementation frameworks, regulation and supervision strategies are desirable..

INTRODUCTION

Comprehensive Abortion Care

Ghana has also made progress in improving access to safe abortion services since the 3rd UPR cycle.

- The Comprehensive Abortion Care (CAC) standards and protocols have been revised
- The list of healthcare cadres permitted to provide medical abortion services have been expanded
- A secretariat has been established, to oversee programmes to integrate CAC services into routine service provisions
- A national CAC training curriculum and training resources have also been developed for providers

ISSUES & CHALLENGES

Comprehensive Abortion Care

- However, the CAC institutionalization process is still being resisted by managers at some health facilities, particularly at the lower facility levels.
- Integrating maternal health, family planning and CAC services at the facility level remains a challenge due to stigma and resistance
- Widespread lack of knowledge about the legality of abortion in Ghana leading to many unsafe abortions .

ISSUES & CHALLENGES

Comprehensive Abortion Care

- In 2019, complications of abortion accounted for 9.2% of direct maternal deaths.
- A recent study on the incidence of abortion in Ghana showed that an estimated 71% of all abortions done in Ghana were illegal

In relation to this, we identify the urgent need for the government to intensify public education and sensitization on the law on abortion to reduce stigma and abortion-related deaths.

INTRODUCTION: Comprehensive Sexuality Education

- At the 3rd UPR Cycle, Ghana received and accepted a recommendation on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE):
 - ***Adopt a sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescents and develop a policy to protect the rights of pregnant teenagers, adolescent mothers and their children and combat discrimination against them.***
- Ghana noted a recommendation from Canada to ***"Scale up and expand youth-friendly and gender-sensitive programmes on comprehensive sexuality education and sexual reproductive health and rights"***.

ISSUES & CHALLENGES

The absence of Comprehensive Sexuality Education

- There was initial progress towards including CSE in the national curriculum.
- Guidelines were developed but the efforts were truncated in 2019 following a public outcry.
- Some conservative groups demonised the guidelines as an attempt by the government to indoctrinate Ghanaian children with an 'LGBTQIA+ agenda'.

ISSUES & CHALLENGES

The absence of Comprehensive Sexuality Education

- In response to this criticism, the guidelines were reviewed and renamed the ‘Reproductive Health Education (RHE) Guidelines’.
- To date, the guidelines have not been adopted.

The absence of CSE has also made young people ill-prepared to navigate SRHR challenges associated with transitioning to adulthood successfully.

- In 2020, Girls between the ages of 10 and 14 accounted for 2,865 pregnancies while those 15–19 accounted for 107,023 pregnancies.
- Also, 5,211 of the 13,982 of HIV new infections occurred among the 15–24 age group.

SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS

Comprehensive Abortion Care

- Scale up the ongoing efforts by the Ministry of Health on public education and sensitization on the law on abortion to reduce stigma and abortion-related deaths.
- Improve access to safe and affordable CAC services by integrating CAC into routine reproductive health services and expanding the cadre of providers for medical abortion according to the new WHO guidelines.

SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS

Comprehensive Sexuality Education

- Scale up and expand age-appropriate youth-friendly and gender-sensitive programmes on comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Finalise the revision and adopt the culturally sensitive and age-appropriate, information and adolescent-friendly CSE guidelines in line with the ICPD+25 agenda.

**THANK YOU,
MERCI,
GRACIAS**

CONTACT INFORMATION

SOCIAL MEDIA

Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana

TOLL FREE /WHATSAPP

0800202010/0245118228

WEBSITE

www.ppag-gh.org

PHONE NUMBER

+233 242783562

EMAIL ADDRESS

dkomlagah@ppag-gh.org

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