

# Regional co-creation Conference of Joint Knowledge Production on Comprehensive Sexuality Education

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# Integrating reproductive health components into school curricula in Morocco

## Gains and prospects

# Plan

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ context of the inclusion of health education in school programs
- ▶ Some international references related to reproductive and sexual health education
- ▶ Definition of health education and reproductive and sexual health education
- ▶ Areas of reproductive and sexual health education
- ▶ Objectives of health education and promotion of reproductive and sexual health
- ▶ Integration of reproductive health components into school curricula
- ▶ Conclusion and recommendations

# Context of the inclusion of health education in school programs

- ❑ **Caring for the promising young generations for the future.**
  - ▶ Young population pyramid
  - ▶ Young people and adolescents under the age of 24 make up more than 42% of the population (25% under the age of 14 and 17% between the ages of 15 and 24).
  - ▶ Attention to the age groups of youth and children is one of the priorities of public policies, especially the education and health sectors.
  - ▶ Addressing the ills that threaten the safety of pupils and endanger their physical and mental health.

WHO : Number of abortions among adolescents (15-19 years): 5.6 million are mostly clandestine abortions (3.9 million) of unwanted pregnancies (2020)

# The context of the inclusion of health education in school programs

## Epidemiological situation

- ▶ Increasing some dangerous behaviors: Increasing drug use, violence and the adoption of risky sexual behavior
- ▶ Early sexual activity with a lack of services and knowledge to avoid risky situations: adolescents (10-19 years) are at risk of unplanned pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV  
*According to the World Health Organization, one million people are infected every day, with sexually transmitted infections.*
- ▶ The cost of treatment is high and is often borne by the state's general budget.
- ▶ Adopting preventive means is the effective solution to the problem. An early age before puberty would prepare learners better.

WHO recommends the inclusion of reproductive education classes from the age of 12

# The context of the inclusion of health education in school programs

- ▶ Using international expertise, including the experiences of international organizations such as the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the United Nations Housing Fund and others.
- ▶ Implement proactive policies to better prevent some risks through measures that we will address later within the school environment.
- ▶ The spread of reproductive and sexual health education, as a key component of health education, so as to promote the prevention of risky behaviors, a measure commensurate with educational performance within educational institutions.
- ▶ The remarkable development in the practice of school life activities, especially in health clubs, and their popularization, and often turn into formative contents in the curriculum, especially in the subject of life and earth sciences.

# Legal and guiding foundations

- ▶ The 2011 constitution provided for the supremacy of ratified international treaties.
- ▶ Public policy respecting Morocco's commitments to the international treaties and contentions ratified relating to sexual and reproductive health. (WHO: The need for early establishment of reproductive health education, particularly in primary schools WHO, 1999; WHO, 2009)
- ▶ Official directives for social sectors concerned with health awareness, including the national education sector
- ▶ Activating the provisions of the Framework Law on the Education, Training and Scientific Research System;
- ▶ Procedural framework for the implementation of the 2022-2026 roadmap for the reform of the national education system
- ▶ Realizing the right to pregnancy planning and the right to family planning as the realization of the right to life by avoiding many maternal deaths, unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions

# Definition of reproductive health education

- ▶ An educational process through which health awareness and general well-being are achieved by providing the individual with knowledge and experience in order to influence his behavior, to live a healthy life.
- ▶ A teaching and learning process based on a course and parallel activities that address the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of reproduction by following a set of appropriate health methods, methods and services.
- ▶ Positive attitude towards reproductive health in order to reduce the rate of sexual disorders acquired by the pupil at school as the ideal place for health promotion and the main source of objective information





# Areas of health education

- ▶ Physical health: includes attention to the body, nutrition, diseases and methods of treatment, personal hygiene, and fitness.
- ▶ Mental health: includes the development of mental abilities, different types of thinking, and strategies for their development.
- ▶ Psychological health: includes health problems that the individual is exposed to, ways to overcome these problems, and methods of achieving mental health.
- ▶ Reproductive health: includes all concepts related to reproduction.



# Objectives of health education

- ▶ Helping each young person gradually acquire the means of choice and adopt responsible behaviors, both for themselves and for others and for the environment." Ottawa Charter
- ▶ Promote responsible behaviour by preventing risks (sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS, unwanted, early or unplanned pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, sexual assault, homophobia, etc.) and making informed decisions through the use of available protections (contraception and safe sexual behavior).
- ▶ Provide pupils with knowledge about the physiology of the reproductive organs (male and female), reproductive mechanisms and the identification of other dimensions of sex (emotional, cultural, moral, social and legal level).
- ▶ Support reflection on mutual respect, caring relationships with others and the rules of living together, respect for the law (issues related to sexual violence, pornography or combating sexism) and the development of positive attitudes towards healthy habits.
- ▶ Educate children about information, resources of help and support inside and outside the school.

# Intégrer les composantes de la santé reproductive dans les programmes scolaires

- ▶ In order to improve the policy of promoting reproductive and sexual health, and with a view to respecting the commitments undertaken internationally, the Ministry of National Education has taken the initiative to formalize this reproductive and sexual health education by integrating it into the school curriculum.
- ▶ Reproductive health education in the primary cycle includes contents and knowledge contents, which are distributed mainly on scientific activity lessons, in the preparatory and secondary levels, on life and earth sciences lessons, as well as in some cases on family education in preparatory school.

# Reproductive Health Education in the School Curriculum

Cognitive contents of reproductive health in the subject of scientific activity

- ▶ The scientific activity curriculum aims to enable the learner to adopt positive attitudes and develop human values through the basic dimensions of scientific culture (knowledge and concepts, develop critical thinking and scientific curiosity, develop scientific research skills... )

# Reproductive Health Education in the School Curriculum

## Cognitive contents of reproductive health in the subject of scientific activity

- The subjects prescribed in the scientific activity of the primary school address the following:
  - ▶ reproductive health education: e.g. biology and reproduction lessons, sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, and reproductive consequences (sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy).
  - ▶ Awareness concepts that promote responsible behavior and protect against risks.
  - ▶ Components about the human body and its growth, such as the various changes related to puberty at the physical, mental, sensory, social and emotional levels (anatomy and functions of internal and external genitalia and their functions, personal hygiene related to puberty, ...)

The contents of reproductive health in the course of scientific activity in the primary corps

Topics	Edition	Level –Age groups
Human Reproduction: Reproductive System Fertilization Pregnancy Childbirth What are sexually transmitted diseases?	First Edition 1991 Third Edition 1994 ((2000))	Sixth year of primary school 11-12 years Age recommended by the World Health Organization

► Language or civic education subjects at the primary level also address the topic of "respect", especially between the sexes, and questions about physical and sexual violence, all of which seek to support thinking about mutual respect, relationships with others...

# Reproductive health education in the life and earth sciences component

- ▶ Since 1971, the 'Life and Earth Sciences' program at the secondary level has included cognitive components related to human reproduction.
- ▶ Since 1996, venereal diseases have been included in addition to human reproduction in both secondary and preparatory levels.

# Reproductive health education in the 'Life and Earth Sciences' component

1967

Absence of the topic of reproduction in programs (French)

1971

Human Reproduction (Secondary)

Human Reproduction and Venereal Diseases (Preparatory) (1996) +  
(Secondary)

1991

2002

Human reproduction and venereal diseases in the  
primary school



School level		Year
Ninth grade (15-16 years)	Reproductive organs and functions / precautions to be taken during childbirth (gonococcal disease) man, diseases and diseases of the reproductive system	<b>1971</b>
Ninth grade	Reproductive organs and functions / precautions to be taken during childbirth (gonococcal disease) Men, venereal diseases/diseases and hygiene of the reproductive system	<b>1974</b>
Ninth grade	Reproductive organs and functions / precautions to be taken during childbirth (gonococcal disease) Men, venereal diseases/diseases and hygiene of the reproductive system	<b>1976</b>
Ninth grade	Reproductive functions/precautions to be taken during childbirth (gonococcal disease) Men, venereal diseases/diseases and hygiene of the reproductive system	<b>1979</b>
Ninth grade	Reproductive functions/precautions to be taken during childbirth (tetanus and gonorrhoea) Men, germs/venereal diseases and hygiene of the reproductive system	<b>1985</b> <b>En arabic</b>
Ninth grade	Human reproduction/insistence on taking precautions at birth Immunology: AIDS as an example of an immune system malfunction	<b>1993</b>
12th grade	Human reproduction/sexually transmitted diseases (gonorrhoea, syphilis, hepatitis, AIDS) AIDS as an example of immune system disorder	<b>1996</b>
Ninth grade	Health education Body health/reproductive health (sexually transmitted diseases: syphilis, gonorrhoea, hepatitis) Immunology: AIDS as an example of an immune system dysfunction	<b>2005</b>

# The evolution of the inclusion of reproductive health education components in natural sciences courses by age groups

## Early childhood 5 years:

- Awareness and appreciation of an individual's gender identity
- Discovering different parts of his body
- Special curiosity about sexual functions

## Childhood 7-6 years

- The development of the body and the discovery of its multiple functions
- Curiosity about sexual functions (pregnancy, childbirth, etc.)

## Childhood 8-10 years

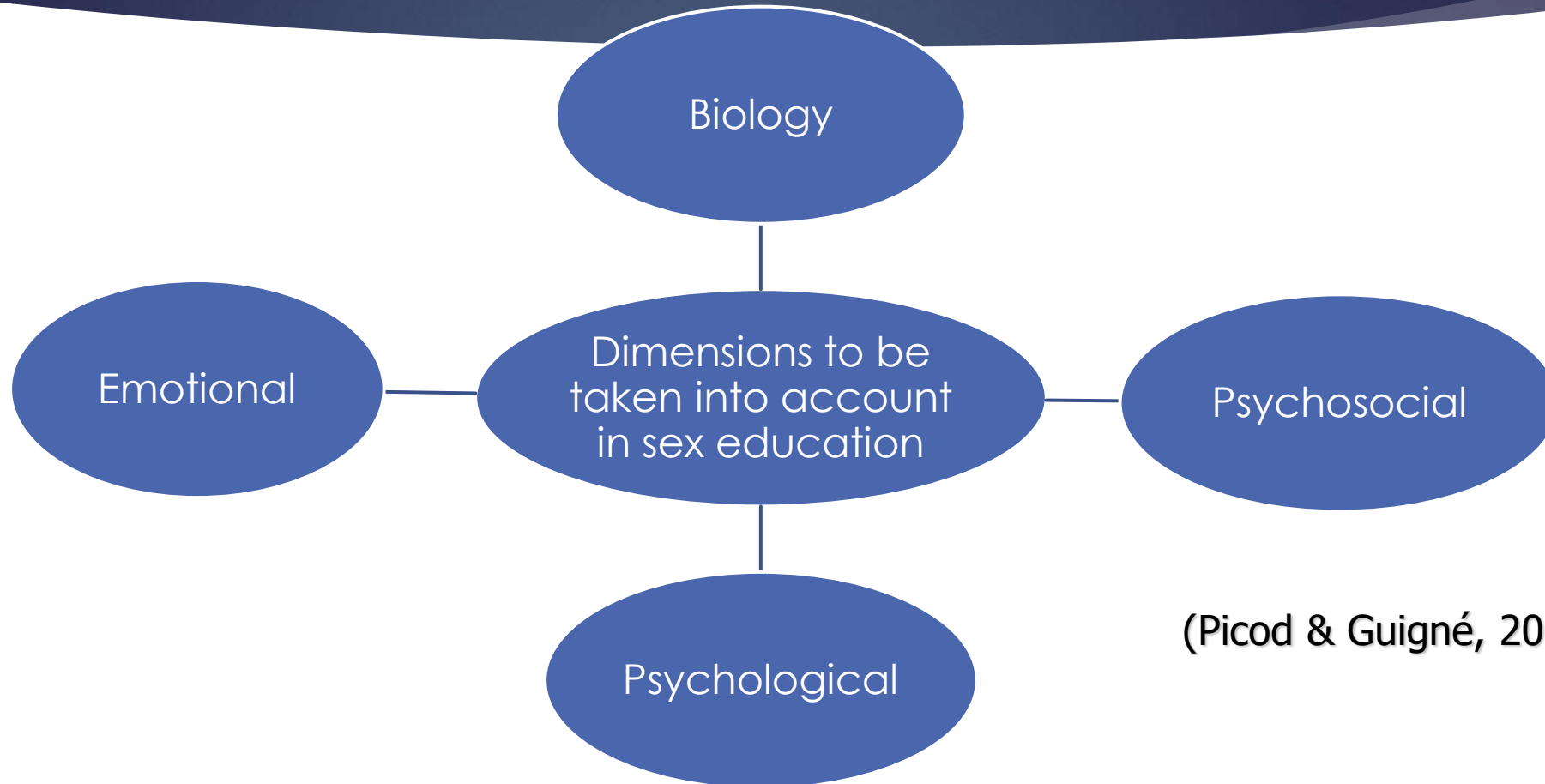
- Physical, emotional and psychosocial changes associated with both sexes
- First feelings of love

## Childhood 11-10 years

- Gradual awakening of sexual attraction

Age groups	Topics	Level
12-15 old years	Reproduction in humans: - reproductive system - insemination - pregnancy - childbirth - What are sexually transmitted diseases?	<b>Year 6 Primary Third Edition: 1993-1994 - First Edition 1991</b>
15-16 old years	Functions of reproduction: - Demographic principles and generalization - Sexually transmitted diseases - When and how does a person become able to reproduce? - Infertility: causes and treatment of some conditions - Birth control	<b>Ninth grade - third preparatory 1985</b>
	Human reproduction / identify some necessary preventive precautions during childbirth Immunology: AIDS as an example of a malfunctioning immune system	<b>1993</b>
	Health education Body health/reproductive health (sexually transmitted diseases: syphilis, gonorrhea, hepatitis) Immunology: AIDS as an example of an immune system dysfunction	<b>2005</b>
17-18 old years	Human reproduction/sexually transmitted diseases (gonorrhea, syphilis, hepatitis, AIDS) Immunology: AIDS as an example of	<b>12th Grade 1993</b>

# The pedagogical approach adopted in the reproductive health component



(Picod & Guigné, 2005)

# The pedagogical approach adopted in the reproductive health component

- Educational programs focus on the physiological/anatomical dimension:
  - a biomedical model through two models: the prevalence of the pathological and therapeutic model
  - Pathological, curative (responsible bacteria, incubation duration, disease symptoms, disease progression in the absence of treatment, forms of infection).
  - Preventive model The concept of hygiene in old programs Health and prevention concepts in new programs

# Partnership and cooperation working on topics related to the concept of reproductive health

## ▶ FNUAP

- During the period 2017-2021, this cooperation included the implementation of a project on promoting awareness-raising to promote access to reproductive education information and the integration of sexual and reproductive health education components into primary and secondary school curricula.
- Assisted in the development of national and regional plans to raise awareness of reproductive health, promote the promotion of the use of long-term contraceptives, strengthen family planning services, and combat sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS

# Menstrual hygiene education

## ► UNICEF and menstrual hygiene education component

The menstrual hygiene education component is a component of the project "Supporting Adolescents through their Transition to Adulthood". The "menstrual hygiene" component is part of the directives of the Ministry of National Education to address some of the challenges within the framework of proactive programmes, such as: - Programme to combat school dropout, especially among girls in rural areas, - Programme to combat early marriage of girls in rural areas, - Programme to combat menstrual hygiene implemented by the department responsible for school life.

# Reproductive health education in the school environment

## ▶ Partnership program with Procter & Gamble for reproductive health education

The partnership aims to promote reproductive health education in the school environment, (agreement between with the Ministry in the field of reproductive health education, concluded on February 27, 1998, and renewed on May 23, 2023).

The program aims to:

- ▶ Develop life skills of learners in the first year of secondary preparatory school;
- ▶ Enable learners to adopt healthy habits towards problem situations, especially sexual and reproductive health;
- ▶ Change misconceptions and representations, as well as combat risk-generating behaviors;
- ▶ Sensitize and involving parents and administrative and educational staff



# Conclusion

- ▶ An institutional evaluation process (February 2024) that included a module in the scientific activity subject related to the contents of reproductive health education in the primary school in the sixth grade, targeting the age group 11 to 12 years, which led to three important conclusions that reflect the interaction of both learners and teachers with the sex education component:
- ▶ The component contributed to enabling students to understand of the living world around them and satisfy their curiosity 77% recorded full comprehension with little progress in favor of girls.

# Conclusion

- ▶ Most of the students are aware of the importance of including this component and their turnout for discussion was great, despite the hesitation recorded by some in the rural world, where the situation was interpreted by cultural and local references on social representations about the topic and not a rejection of it. Teachers' demand to adopt different activation methods, including problem-solving situations or peer education...

# Recommendations

- ▶ Adopting the principle of internal and external integration between components and materials to have sex education, reproductive health and health security in the curriculum a transversal topic that extends to all subjects and wires,
- ▶ Adopting the cognitive gradient to prepare learners cognitively from the early years of schooling,
- ▶ Studying ways to adopt teaching according to the approach of the primary school teacher
- ▶ Strengthening partnerships with various actors, especially in the field of health