

### **'Reproductive health awareness must for youth'**

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ISLAMABAD - World Population Foundation (WPF), Pakistan concluded a three-day training for the master trainers on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) education for adolescent girls and boys here in Islamabad.

This initiative is part of its flagship programme "Life Skills Based Education" (LSBE), being implemented in public and private schools of Pakistan since 2003 in various districts.

A total of 14 master trainers from Faisalabad, Peshawar, Quetta and Vehari attended the training, which focused on providing them with the information and knowledge on issues faced by adolescents in Pakistan. One of the master trainers, Rubbina Mussey from Peshawar shared that the training is well suited for school-going girls and boys and that she had learnt a lot about the issues particularly child protection. Sabohi another master trainer shared that there were many things about adolescent boys that even she did not know of; however, after the training she has not merely realised their importance but also feels well-equipped to go back and train teachers to provide this much needed information to young boys and girls in a culturally appropriate way.

It is important to consider that Pakistan is one of the 164 signatories of Dakar Education for All (EFA), which very clearly identifies and states "Life Skills" as a basic learning need for all young people. Being the 6th most populous country in the world, Pakistan has by far the youngest population. This demographic situation provides our young people with an exceptional opportunity to compete in whatever sphere they choose, as adolescence is an age of physical, psychological and mental growth and change. However, in our culture, there is no mechanism to guide these young adults about the change in life and functions.

A vast majority (65 %) of adolescents remain unaware of even such simple matters as physical changes in boys and menstruation in girls, before attaining puberty. Furthermore, they are unable to protect themselves from sexual abuse. About three quarter of the young people think that this information should be given to them beforehand.

It is an interactive learning programme that empowers young people to deal with challenging situations effectively by making right choices and adopting responsible behaviours in their lives. It has also proved as an initiative and approach to provide and ensure holistic quality education. The process is not only self-guided and experiential learning (learning by doing), but is based on the natural processes by which young people acquire knowledge, attitudes, skills and ultimately behaviours. The Programme involves teachers on voluntary basis to equip young people with this information.

This is the link; <http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Islamabad/04-Jul-2009/Reproductive-health-awareness-must-for-youth>