

The World Starts With Me (WSWM)

A successful comprehensive sexuality education programme for in- and out-of-school youth in Africa and Asia



from:
the World Starts
With me!,
Ugandan version

The World Starts With Me (WSWM) is a comprehensive sexuality education programme with a human rights perspective for in- and out-of-school youth. WSWM is computer-based, available on CD Rom, Internet and in print. It targets young people in the age bracket of 12-19 years.

WSWM was developed in Uganda in 2003 by Rutgers WPF in collaboration with Butterfly Works, SchoolNet Uganda and teachers and students of pilot schools. Today, contextualized WSWM versions are used by numerous schools, youth clubs and other out-of-school settings in a number of countries in Africa and Asia.

Aim

WSWM is an innovative interactive curriculum on sexual and reproductive health and rights. It combines SRHR education with skills regarding creative expression and, when computers are used, IT skills as well. WSWM helps young people to make own decisions about their sexuality and sexual life, whenever that will start. WSWM aims to contribute not only to the improvement of the sexual and reproductive health of young people, but also to their social and economic development.

Logical sequence of lessons with a learner centred approach

In WSWM virtual peer educators guide young people through a learner centred learning process, relieving teachers and other educators of the task to initiate sensitive discussions themselves. Computer- or manual-based learning in small groups of students offers privacy and is combined with interactive didactic methods such as small group assignments, class discussions and skills exercises like role plays.

WSWM has a conscious build up order of lessons. The 14 lessons start with building self-esteem, exploring personal values and norms and gaining insight in the own emotional, physical and sexual development as a basis for learning to make own, well-informed decisions.

The next section addresses how the social environment can influence and support own decision-making : relationships with parents, friends and peers; gender equity; sexual diversity and sexual and reproductive rights.

The core lesson is about sexuality and love; it presents sexuality and love as beautiful and powerful sources in life.

Only then the prevention of sexual health problems is addressed and how to cope with them when being confronted with them: unintended pregnancy, early motherhood, (unsafe) abortion, STIs/HIV, AIDS stigma and sexual harassment and abuse, while keeping up a positive view on sexuality. Finally, after applying lessons learned on planning an own future and learning to use them in peer education, WSWM ends with an exhibition at which the young people educate themselves their peers, parents and community.

Contextualizing WSWM programs to local context and needs

Since the start of WSWM in 2004 in Uganda, the WSWM program has been adapted for in- and out-of-school youth. To reflect the local context and meet the local needs WSWM was contextualized to each country and setting. Today WSWM is running in more than 10 countries in Asia and Africa.

Guided by an Advisory Board with key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education and of Health, the Family Planning, the AIDS Commission, UNESCO, a coordinating implementing agency in each country contextualised the WSWM program with a Working Group of teachers and young people. Based on a local situation analysis and needs assessment, relevant issues, objectives, content, didactics and lay out were identified and put in place into the local draft WSWM. Based on the pilot of the draft WSWM by trained pilot teachers, the draft WSWM was adjusted. Pilot teachers then were trained as master trainers who could train new teachers. The final WSWM version was then implemented and up-scaled, embedded in a school policy on sexual and reproductive health.



DAKU!, the Indonesian program, contextualized from the Ugandan version the World Starts With Me!

Contextualization of WSWM always follows Intervention Mapping, a protocol for the development of evidence-based behaviour change interventions. The adaptation from the Ugandan pilot programme into the first Indonesian programme was thoroughly monitored, and documented; see the article [Using Intervention Mapping for systematic adaptation of SRHR education for young people](#) (2011).

WSWM programs in more than 10 Countries

Today WSWM programs are running for in- and out-of-school youth in more than 10 countries in Asia and Africa: Indonesia, Papua, Thailand, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Pakistan; Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Ghana and Malawi. Half 2014 starts contextualization of WSWM in Burundi and Zambia.

In most countries - in Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Papua, Thailand, Pakistan and Vietnam - WSWM is taught in secondary schools. In Uganda and Ethiopia an adapted, paper-based WSWM is taught in primary schools. In 2014 the Ugandan Ministry of Education and Sports officially recommended WSWM as one of the national curricula, secondary schools can use.

In Vietnam and Malawi WSWM programs are developed and implemented in teacher training colleges, while in Indonesia special WSWM programs run in schools for blind and deaf youth.

For out-of-school youth contextualized WSWM programmes target young people in informal settings (slums) in Kenya, in correctional institutes/youth prisons in Indonesia, and children and youth living with HIV in counselling centres in Uganda.

Effectiveness

With its positive, explicit, rights-based approach towards sexuality WSWM proves to be an effective and attractive tool, adaptable to different settings, countries and cultures. The cross-cultural evaluation in 2009, done among more than 9,000 young people in each of the countries Uganda, Kenya, Indonesia and Thailand, revealed some significant effects such as:

- Increased knowledge and risk perception
- Intention to abstain from sex
- Intention to avoid forced sex
- Positive attitudes towards condoms
- Self-confidence in condom use in the future
- The intention to consult health services when needed

See also the article: [The World Starts With Me: A multilevel evaluation of a comprehensive sex education programme targeting adolescents in Uganda \(2011\)](http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/11/334), <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/11/334>

Appreciations

Feedback in recent years indicates that students and teachers experience WSWM as a complete, thoroughly developed tool. Young people highly appreciate WSWM, while teachers and educators think it is easy to use.

WSWM is also globally appreciated. The design won the Global Nica Award in 2004, a prestigious annual prize for electronic art, digital community, culture and music. In addition, in 2010 UNESCO's International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education recommended WSWM as a model program for comprehensive sexuality education, out of 18 sexuality education programs worldwide.

Challenges

The main challenges of WSWM concern the implementation. WSWM promotes young people's rights and acknowledges that young people are sexually active before marriage. It touches upon sensitive issues such as the use of condoms and other contraceptives for unmarried young people, masturbation, sexual diversity and abortion, while using an open and explicit approach of sexuality.

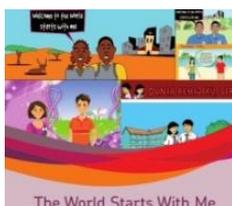
In spite of thorough training, there are teachers who still feel uncomfortable discussing sexuality in the class. Some assume - contrary to research findings - that parents would oppose education on sexual and reproductive health in schools. They therefore limit their teaching to certain lessons or only parts of the lessons. Furthermore, participatory methods are often new for teachers, causing some of them leaving out the more complex didactic methods like role plays. Finally, because WSWM is in most countries taught as an extra-curricular activity, many teachers experience difficulties in finding the right time and place, while teaching WSWM in free time also requires a huge intrinsic motivation.

Scaling up and Rolling out

Making this education tool available to as many young people as possible requires roll-out to more regions and countries and up-scaling within countries. In 2013, rolling out started in Ethiopia, while a pilot on up-scaling is currently running in Kenya and Uganda.

In the pilot on up-scaling WSWM a model and guidelines will be developed. Using a 'whole school approach', the pilot aims to find out how to timetable WSWM, how to reach more students within one school and how ownership by schools and communities improves chances on sustainability.

Versions



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Thailand
Kenya
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Uganda:

- The World Starts With Me! (WSWM), for secondary schools: www.theworldstarts.org
- A Positive World Starts With Me (WSWM+), for young people born with HIV and other young positives
- My World, My Life (MWML), the paper-based WSWM version for upper primary schools

Kenya:

- The World Starts With Me!, for secondary schools
- The World Starts With Me!, for disadvantaged (slum) youth
- My World, My Life (MWML), for upper primary schools

Ethiopia:

- The World Starts With Me! (WSWM), for secondary schools: <http://www.wswmethiopia.org/>
- My World, My Life (MWML), for upper primary schools

Ghana:

- The World Starts With Me!, for secondary schools

Malawi:

- The World Starts With Me!, for the Teacher Training Colleges

Indonesia:

- DAKU! Dunia Remajaku Seru, for secondary schools
- MAJU!, for special education schools for audibly challenged and deaf youth
- Langhka Pastiku!, for special education schools for visually challenged and blind youth
- SERU!, for juvenile correction institutes and youth prisons

Thailand:

- The World Turns by My Hands!, for secondary schools in Bangkok

Vietnam:

- Journey to Adulthood, for the Teacher Training University Students of Danang University of Education
- The Teenage World, for secondary schools
- Equipped for Life, for junior high schools

Pakistan:

- The World Starts With Me!, for secondary schools

Bangladesh:

- The World Starts With Me!, for secondary schools

More information:

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If you're curious about the lessons, check out the Ethiopian to get insight in a part of the curriculum: www.wswmethiopia.org

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- My World, My Life: contact [Sanderijn van der Doef](#), technical advisor at Rutgers WPF
- A Positive World Starts With Me: contact [Jo Reinders](#), technical advisor at Rutgers WPF