Teacher training for Sexual and Reproductive Health Education

**1.**      **Objective and relevance (the world around us)**

What do you want to achieve through the intervention?

The intervention aims to provide training in sexual and reproductive health rights (S&RHR) topics for teachers in lower income schools in Colombia, specifically in Cali and Popayán, in order for them to create a S&RHR program for students of all ages within their respective schools (primary-high school). The intervention consists of a preparation phase, a total of four workshops, as well as an implementation stage for the participating teachers with a group of students and a feedback session. Material will be provided for the teachers in order to ensure understanding of all topics and as a tool for them to use in the future planning of S&RHR classes.

The objective for this intervention is to inform teachers about topics such as anatomy, puberty, menstruation, birth control methods, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), the LGBTQ+ community, consent, gender stereotypes, sexual and reproductive rights, social media, and more, as well as to inspire with exercises for the local teachers to bring S&RHR education into their classrooms and make it part of their curriculum. It is important that teachers are contextualized on current issues amongst teens regarding these topics, since this information is key to creating an efficient S&RHR curriculum. Studies show that an evidence and rights-based S&RHR education helps delay sexual activity, increase the likelihood of students utilizing birth control and condoms, and reduce the number of sexual partners (Planned Parenthood, n.d). These safe sex behaviors may also help lower STIs and teen pregnancies within this population as well.

Thereby, the intervention will work principally with SDG 4, quality education and SDG 5, gender equality, but also cover SDG 1, no poverty and SDG 3, good health and well-being. Lastly, through the collaboration between Mi Cuerpo/Min Krop Denmark and Mi Cuerpo/Min Krop Colombia, the intervention will also work for SDG 17, partnerships for the goals.

Through this intervention, all three aspects of the development triangle will be combined. The main activities are strategic interventions with the teachers that will later support the advocacy for better S&RHR education at local schools, but also strengthen the organizational capacity at the local schools in their planning and implementation of their S&RHR education programs.

Why is the intervention important?

The two foundations have worked with over 2700 students in 10 lower income schools in Colombia and Mexico in the period since May 2019, teaching S&RHR workshops to students in lower income schools. When speaking to teachers, they have asked on more than one occasion if Mi Cuerpo/Min Krop Colombia offers workshops for teachers or asked for help in creating their S&RHR program.

This intervention is not only important, but necessary, given that, even though schools are required  by the state to develop and implement S&RHR within the curriculum, currently, it appears that there is no specific program available for schools to follow, and the state does not offer training in S&RHR for teachers. Essentially, teachers have little to no time to plan such programs, and without training or substantial understanding of the topics, it is difficult for teachers to do such planning which often results in inadequate lesson plans with often little to no follow-up on the actual implementation. As UNESCO (2018) has stated, without proper education, students are left only with “confusing and conflicting information about relationships and sex”: this is especially true for a country that still heavily believes in home remedies to prevent pregnancies and cure ailments. It has also been stated that S&RHR programs work best when school-based programs create a joint effort with teachers, training institutes and youth-friendly services (UNESCO, 2018).

By providing this training, teachers will be able to create S&RHR programs, including topics such as anatomy, birth control, sexually transmitted infections, consent, debunking myths, the LGBTQ+ community, and other sexual and reproductive rights with an eye to age adequate topics and language. These are just some of the topics supported by Mi Cuerpo/Min Krop Colombia. Both foundations stand behind UNESCO’s (2018) assertion that comprehensive S&RHR education

*supports young people’s empowerment by improving their analytical, communication and other life skills for health and well-being in relation to sexuality, human rights, values, healthy and respectful relationships, cultural and social norms, gender equality, non-discrimination, sexual behaviour, violence and gender-based violence, consent, sexual abuse and harmful practices.*

Describe the context of the intervention:

The intervention will take place at schools for lower income families, and located in lower income areas. Even though these are more vulnerable populations, the foundations have chosen schools in relatively safe neighborhoods within the cities of Cali and Popayán. All schools have proper edifications, electricity, water, and are accessible through public transport. The only possible instability, there could be either a student or teacher strike within the public schools, although this would not put the workshoppers in danger, given that most strikes are planned ahead of time and are peaceful for the most part, but could set the workshops on standby since teachers rarely participate in activities other than what is strike related in situations like these.

When it comes to S&RHR conditions, it has been found that Colombia has a high teen pregnancy rate, where 1 of every 5 teenage girl fall pregnant between the ages of 15 to 19 (ICBF, 2015). The Colombian Society for Pediatrics (2018) has noted that a lack of information and guidance has caused teen pregnancies to become a public health concern. It is important to note that many schools still provide abstinence-only information, which has been proved ineffective time and time again (Advocates for Youth, 2014). And, as it is widely known, teen pregnancy in lower income students contributes to the poverty cycle, as most do not finish their high school education and 20% get pregnant again 7-14 months after their first child, and 33% get pregnant 14-24 months post (ICBF, 2015), decimating the possibility of finishing school or advancing to a higher education. Providing information about S&RHR throughout basic education will allow students to learn about these topics and put aside myths that endanger students´ health, making them better decision makers in the future.

Another topic of interest, which still tends to be taboo within older generations, is the LGBTQ+ community. In Colombia, between 2014 and 2019, 542 LGBTQ+ people were murdered. Also, 69 LGBTQ+ activists have received threats from 2016 to 2019. In order to bring these numbers down, younger generations must be educated and sensitized about this community, ridding Colombian culture of dangerous taboos and myths. (Colombia Diversa, 2020)

Gender equality and violence, of course, is a major topic within the program. Teaching about subjects such as consent, menstruation, and gender stereotypes, as well as discussing S&RHR, help in the battle against gender inequality and violence. In Colombia, in 2019 alone, there were 571 femicides reported (Observatorio Feminicidios Colombia, 2019). Over the past 10 years, sexual crimes have been steady at over 21,000 per year; in 2018, 26,059 medical-legal examinations were done for alleged sexual crimes, 85% were women (Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal, 2018). It is reported that most of the time, the aggressors are close to the victim, either a partner, family member, or acquaintance (Observatorio Feminicidios Colombia, 2019).

Not only are there issues with violence against women, but economically as well. In Colombia, 40.7% of households are headed by women, yet 13 out of 100 women cannot find jobs, compared to 8 out of 100 men. Even though women are at the same university level as their male counterparts, 11% still struggle to get a job, opposed to 9% of men; and when they do get jobs, they will only make 88 pesos for every 100 a man makes in the same position. When it comes to housework and care without pay, on average, women spend 56 hours a week, when men spend only 23.9 hours a week. (DANE & ONU Mujer, 2019)

Describe how this intervention can contribute to supporting collaboration, public engagement and civil organising and how this in time will contribute to social justice (realisation of people’s rights, reducing inequality and fighting poverty, participation in decision-making processes, equal access to resources, and just institutions).

It is clear that many of the issues discussed prior are caused by outdated cultural beliefs about health, women, gender, sex, and more. By training Colombia´s educators in these topics, and ensuring students receive comprehensive S&RHR education, these future generations can change the culture of myths, sexism and inequality into one of facts, acceptance, and equality. The rights-based approach will allow the beneficiaries to learn and become advocates for enforcing the S&RHR in their communities. Furthermore, it will allow teachers to educate their students not only about birth control methods, but also gender stereotypes, which has been found to help fight poverty and gender inequality. By giving teachers these resources, they will be able to create S&RHR curriculums, allowing for equal access to information for students.

What climate- and environmental conditions do the partnership and/or the intervention need to respond to? And how have the partners responded to it? This could be in relation to the conditions of the target groups, the number of flights or the activities of the intervention, and how these affect the environment or climate in the area.

The intervention seeks to avoid unnecessary commutes, all activities will take place in the local schools where the teachers work. For the independent workshops, the location is central and easily accessible by public transportation. All workshoppers are stationed at the cities where the workshops will take place, which make using public transportation to commute to the schools possible and the most environmentally friendly option.

**2.  The partnership/collaborators (our starting point)**

Describe any previous acquaintance or cooperation between the partners, and how these experiences have fed into the development of the proposed intervention.

The two foundations have been collaborating for the last 3 years, and are currently working together on a project, implementing S&RHR education programs directly with teenagers at partner schools in Cali and Popayán. In collaboration, two workshop programs have been developed that run with 8th graders and 9th-11th graders, where all S&RHR topics discussed prior, are taught. Within these workshops a creative and fun approach to these topics is implemented, utilizing appropriate language, creating dynamic activities, and fomenting student participation throughout. These programs also include student feedback in order to ensure the best information and methods of teaching. To support the student workshops, four Fanzines on different S&RHR topics have been developed and are available for free for the students.

Through this work, not only do the foundations possess refined information about S&RHR and knowledge about Colombian S&RHR in their constitution, but there is also close contact with the local teachers who are interested in the workshops, appreciate the methodology and often express that they would like to learn more on the field, but often do not know where to start or turn to for inspiration.

The hope for this new project is for it to be self-sustainable, given that teachers will be able to become replicators and create a comprehensive S&RHR curriculum. The current project runs until December 2020 and will be evaluated for further implementation in 2021 after the final M&E process. Both will run parallel in order to ensure students are receiving this information as teachers at their pace implement what they have learned.

Describe the partners and other actors’ contributions, roles, and responsibilities.

Mi Cuerpo/Min Krop Denmark’s role in the project is divided in two parts:

1.  Support the Colombian partner during the entire process, from development of material, to intervention and monitoring; to do so, both foundations will be working closely with each other, as done in the collaboration project the last three years and counting.

Mi Cuerpo/Min Krop Denmark will have a representative in Colombia participating in the project alongside the Colombian partner. The expatriate staff, Salka Wollesen Breum, who lives in Colombia for the better part of the year, has several years of experience both developing and implementing didactic material and participative class dynamics, a background from cultural and language studies and extensive knowledge on the cultural and socio-economic context from working alongside the Colombian partner.

She will be responsible for introducing a collaborative approach within the didactic material and workshops, given that she has different, yet complimentary, capacities from the Colombian staff on this subject. She offers knowledge on dynamic methodologies that is beneficial to Mi Cuerpo/Min Krop Colombia to create more inclusive workshops and further develop their long-term capacity development, looking into future projects. Given her current living situation, it is opportune and beneficial to have her participate in the development of the workshops and, when Mi Cuerpo/Min Krop Colombia sees it fit, in the implementations and evaluations of trainings in schools.

2. Information work in Denmark where Mi Cuerpo/Min Krop Denmark will develop material for presentations mainly at Danish high schools.

The intervention will be in cooperation with Mi Cuerpo/Min Krop Colombia who have three years’ experience in S&RHR education workshops with teenagers in schools in and around Cali and Popayán, Colombia. The Colombian foundation has experience in sustainable human development and psychology, which is key in the process of developing material, implementing, and doing follow up evaluations on the program.

The mix of qualifications and experiences between the Colombian staff and the expat staff gives both organizations a unique opportunity to learn from each other and develop together. Furthermore, the mix of knowledge from each organization makes the project come alive in the best possible way.

Throughout Mi Cuerpo/Min Krop Colombia’s work, the foundation has developed a strong connection with local partner schools and have been key in identifying the need for providing training for and selecting the local teachers to become replicators and advocates for a thorough, taboo-free and rights-based S&RHR education. Mi Cuerpo/Min Krop Colombia has a key role in planning and are responsible for the workshops and the implementations and evaluations of trainings with the chosen partner schools: 5 schools in Cali, 3 schools in Popayán and 1 independent location in Popayán with open calls.

As strategic partners, the local schools are in charge of providing the space and time for the teachers to participate in the program and help in the selection process of the teachers to participate.

**3.  Target groups, objectives, and expected results (our intervention)**

Who will benefit from the intervention? How many people will benefit in total? How will they participate in the intervention?

The direct beneficiaries of this intervention will be the 77 estimated teachers that participate in the program. The organizations in collaboration with the strategic partners have chosen teachers from lower income schools, listed below. Secondary beneficiaries would be, of course, students at these schools, who will be receiving S&RHR classes as part of the implementation training which is estimated as 25 students per class, approximately 1.925 students in total. The schools themselves would be another secondary beneficiary, as they would now be able to comply with the state’s requirements on S&RHR education. The idea is that the participating teachers will also become advocates and replicators, informing other teachers on these vital topics and continue to teach S&RHR as an integrated part of their yearly curriculum.

Schools in Popayán (approx. participants)

●  El Mirador, 8 teachers

●  Colegio Creativo Pedagógico del Cauca, 10 teachers

●  Gabriela Mistral, 8

●  Independent space, 10 teachers

Schools in Cali (approx. participants)

● Liceo Cañaveral de Occidente, 13 teachers

● I.E. Técnico Industrial Veinte de Julio sede central, 5 teachers

● I.E Técnico Industrial Veinte de Julio sede Adán Cordobés, 5 teachers

● Colegio San Francisco Javier, 8 teachers

● Julio Caicedo y Téllez, 10 teachers

Describe how the intervention will be implemented: what activities will be carried out? With whom? And when?

After a four-month period of planning and developing material, the intervention will be carried out via a 4-workshop program at 8 local schools and in 1 independent location for local teachers, meaning a total of 36 workshops with the participation of aprox. 77 teachers. Each workshop will be 2 hours.

Mi Cuerpo/Min Krop Colombia have been in close contact with the strategic partners to adjust expectations of topics, time availability and needs of the teachers. This contact has also allowed to inquire about interest in and offer the program to the relevant teachers in order for them to participate. Generally, the teachers who are in charge of developing and implementing the S&RHR education program at each school are the most interested, but the program is also open for other teachers to participate if they are interested, or wish to include S&RHR in some way into their classes.

The total time for the program is estimated to be 12 months, including the 4 months to prepare the material prior to the implementation, 5 months for the workshops, and 3 months for teacher intervention and final evaluation. The preparation phase will start in November 2020.

The program is divided into the following segments:

1. Three information workshops

The first three workshops at each location will be information-based, which means through exercises and classroom teaching. The topics taught will be:

● Anatomy, menstruation, birth control, and STIs.

● S&RHR, discrimination, and empathy.

● Consent, social media, abortion, gender, sex, gender stereotypes, and LGBTQ+.

At the end of the last workshop, teachers will be given a “quiz” about the main topics discussed; this is done not only to provide feedback, but as a tool for Mi Cuerpo/Min Krop Colombia to self-evaluate.

2. One workshop to develop a class

With the knowledge the participating teachers have acquired throughout the three information workshops, they will now develop, with workshopper’s guidance, their own S&RHR class to implement with a group of students. Teachers will be provided a rubric with the basic information, exercise examples and methods needed to create a successful class.

3. Teacher implementation

Having developed their S&RHR class, it is now time to implement it with their students. A workshopper will sit in on the class, taking notes and evaluating based on the rubric given to the teacher.

4. Feedback

After the teacher’s class, the workshopper will sit down with the teacher and provide feedback on the different elements of the class, such as information validity, activities, modality, etc. Students will also be given a short survey about the class and this will be used during the feedback as well.

**4.  Intervention-related information work in Denmark**

The purpose of the information work, the target groups and means:

Mi Cuerpo/Min Krop Denmark has two years of experience doing information work at Danish high schools, specifically with Spanish students, as a supplement to topics regarding Latin America. It is important to inform based on factual knowledge about the situation in Colombia, to be able to debunk myths about the country and inspire youngsters with interest in Latin America and the situation on gender equality around the world.

The information work will be 1,5-2 hour presentations at high schools around the country with 2.g and 3.g Spanish groups. There is an established contact with several high schools, but further expanding the network of collaborating schools are part of the work as well.

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