

**Ensuring Rights and Choices  
for All:**

**Practices of UNFPA China  
Livestreaming Comprehensive  
Sexuality Education Project in  
Qinghai, Sichuan and Yunnan  
Provinces**

**2019-2020**



United Nations Population Fund



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## FOREWORD

With 1.4 billion people, China is the most populous country in the world. The sexual and reproductive health, rights, and choices of its people have huge implications for social and economic development. The better informed that people are about sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, the better able they will be to enjoy healthy and satisfying lives, and the more likely that China as a whole will thrive.

And yet, studies by UNFPA and others show that Chinese young people are sorely lacking in information about sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Among the consequences of this ignorance are high rates of unintended pregnancies, abortions, HIV, and sexually transmitted infections—not to mention emotional or social impact and gender inequality.

With the funding support from UNFPA Innovation Fund and the Danish Government, UNFPA China's pilot project designed and implemented with Marie Stopes International China on comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) offers an innovative solution for provision of sexuality education through live streaming to young people in remote areas.



The central innovation of this project is live streaming. Schools — especially rural schools — lack the expertise and resources necessary to teach sexuality education. By using live streaming technology, the course shares quality sexuality education curricula and instructors, and engages local school teachers and administrators for support. During the pilot project, the course was taught in 5 middle schools in Qinghai, Sichuan and Yunnan provinces.

The project demonstrates the value of CSE at all levels.

**CSE is good for individuals and families.**

Such education leads to happier family life, higher quality of life, better knowledge on SRHR, fewer unintended pregnancies and abortions, and lower rates of HIV and sexually transmitted infections. Sexuality education sets young people off in a good direction in life.

**CSE is good for the country.** When individuals and families have access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, that contributes to lower health care costs, higher labor productivity, and greater gender equality for society as a whole. That's good for China today — and tomorrow.

**CSE is good for China's commitment to development.** Sexuality education helps China fulfill two agendas that are cornerstones in global efforts for sustainable development. These agendas are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), both of which affirm universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, information and education for all including adolescents and young people.

This is an innovative CSE project that reduces cost, ensures quality, and expands accessibility. It provides a model that can now be expanded to other schools and regions nationwide.



**Ms. Navchaa Suren**

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# INTRODUCTION—THE NEED

A majority of Chinese adolescents are unprepared for making decisions regarding relationships, sex, and contraception. That's the upshot of a UNFPA survey of adolescents in Yushu and Yonghe counties, and indications are that those results hold true nationwide. Among the findings of UNFPA's survey in 2019 in Qinghai Province where the CSE project took place:

- More than 90% of adolescents interviewed said that their teachers did not give any instruction on sexual and reproductive health (SRH).
- Over half of survey respondents say that their parents are their main source of information on SRH—but 90% of them have limited contact with their parents. Even when they do discuss sexuality, they don't approach "sensitive" topics.
- More than 70% of adolescents said they needed information on SRH.

- Adolescents surveyed lack even a basic understanding of their own physiology and development. They have heard only "little" about family planning, and most have no idea how to get contraceptives.



**Sexuality education is something that our school has always wanted to do, but there were no opportunities until we met you. ”**

— School principal (school A)

These findings are backed up by national figures, which show that 96% of young people in China do not demonstrate good knowledge of SRH.<sup>1</sup> As a result, adolescents are anxious, confused, and know little about their own bodies or how to navigate sexual relationships. This ignorance carries over into young adulthood.

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<sup>1</sup> X.-Y. Zheng, G. Chen and Y.-L. Han, "Survey of youth access to reproductive health in China," *Population & Development*, no. 16, pp. 2-16, 2010.



*Students participate in the online CSE session*

According to the National Health and Family Planning Commission (2015), there were 13 million abortions carried out in the country in 2015. Sixty-two percent of these abortions were performed among women aged between 20 and 29. That means high healthcare costs for the country.

These numbers also bode poorly for China's progress on the

SDGs, especially goals numbers 3 (health), 4 (education), and 5 (gender equality)—and on the ICPD Programme of Action, which urges support for integral sexuality education and addressing the special needs of youth and adolescents.

If the problem is ignorance, the solution is education.



## THE PROJECT

Thanks to a pilot project supported by UNFPA China on comprehensive sexuality education, over 2,300 adolescents in five schools have learned what is happening with their developing bodies, how to navigate sexual relationships, and where to turn for more information.

These young people will now grow up to be more confident and caring, with stronger relationships and healthier habits.



Our students never had direct access to sexuality-related education as they do now with the live-streaming CSE sessions. Their knowledge on CSE was zero! Some girls didn't know what was going on when they first got their periods. Their families wouldn't explain it to them. ”

— School principal (school D)



Students participate in the online CSE session



Students participate in the online CSE session



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