



**RWANDA HEALTH INITIATIVE
FOR YOUTH AND WOMEN**

SCHOOL OUTREACH INITIATIVE FOR SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH EDUCATION AND LIFE SKILLS

Objective

To increase knowledge, awareness, and positive health behaviors among adolescents through school outreach visits that provide comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) education and life skills information in collaboration with primary health facilities youth corners, school administrations, and student health clubs.

Background and Rationale

Adolescents spend a significant portion of their time in schools, making educational institutions important platforms for reaching young people with accurate information on Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH). Many adolescents face challenges related to puberty, relationships, gender norms, menstrual health, peer pressure, substance use, and access to reliable health information. Without adequate knowledge and guidance, young people may be exposed to risks such as unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), gender-based violence, substance abuse, and poor mental health outcomes.

Recognizing the important role of schools in adolescent development, the Rwanda Health Initiative for Youth and Women (RHIYW) with its partners collaborates with school management and school health clubs to conduct outreach visits that provide age-appropriate SRH education and life skills sessions. These activities complement existing school programs and create opportunities for adolescents to access accurate information, ask questions, and develop skills that support healthy decision-making; strengthening connections between schools, youth-friendly health services, and community support system.

Implementation Approach

The intervention is implemented through organizing outreach visits to secondary schools and encourage collaboration with youth corners established within primary health facilities. During these visits, trained healthcare providers, health educators, peer educators, and youth development specialists facilitate interactive learning sessions.



Activities include school-wide awareness sessions, small group discussions, peer education initiatives, health club engagement, question-and-answer forums, and the distribution of youth-friendly educational materials. The program also organizes visits for students to youth centers and health facility youth corners, helping adolescents become familiar with available services and increasing their confidence in seeking support when needed.

In addition to benefiting students, the initiative strengthens the capacity of healthcare providers working in youth-friendly corners by creating opportunities to engage directly with adolescents, better understand their concerns, and improve the quality and responsiveness of SRHR information and services provided at the community level.

SRHR and Life Skills Education

The outreach sessions provide education on a wide range of topics on adolescent growth and development, including puberty, personal hygiene, emotional well-being, self-esteem, and healthy social relationships. Students also receive information on menstrual health management, fertility awareness, and common myths and misconceptions related to reproductive health.

The program promotes healthy relationships by addressing communication skills, mutual respect, gender equality, consent, and personal boundaries. It also raises awareness about gender-based violence, including prevention, reporting mechanisms, and available support services.

Age-appropriate information is provided on pregnancy prevention, family planning concepts, HIV and STI prevention, and the importance of accessing youth-friendly health services. The initiative further promotes awareness of sexual and reproductive health rights, informed decision-making, and the prevention of unsafe abortion through education on unintended pregnancy prevention and access to accurate health information.

Recognizing the broader challenges affecting adolescents, the program incorporates life skills education covering mental health, emotional resilience, stress management, substance abuse prevention, leadership development, career aspirations, goal setting, and responsible digital citizenship. Through these sessions, young people gain practical skills that support their overall well-being, educational success, and future opportunities.

Results Achieved (2019–2025)

The School Outreach Initiative has reached and engaged more than 10,000 adolescents across multiple schools through Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) education and life skills sessions. Participants have received age-appropriate information on adolescent development, menstrual health, HIV and STI prevention, gender equality, prevention of gender-based violence, mental health, substance abuse prevention, leadership, and goal setting.



The initiative has contributed to increased awareness and understanding of key SRHR issues among students, strengthened life skills and decision-making capacities, and improved knowledge of available youth-friendly health services. Through sustained collaboration with schools, student health clubs, and primary health facility youth corners, the program has also strengthened referral linkages and created supportive environments where adolescents can access accurate information, seek guidance, and make informed choices about their health and well-being.

Development Impact

The School Outreach Initiative contributes to healthier, safer, and more empowered adolescents by providing the knowledge, skills, and support systems necessary to make informed decisions about their health and future. By promoting positive behavior change, reducing exposure to health and social risks, and strengthening access to youth-friendly services, the program supports national efforts to reduce adolescent pregnancy, HIV transmission, school dropout, substance abuse, and gender-based violence.

Beyond immediate health outcomes, the initiative contributes to improved gender equality, and youth empowerment, enabling young people to reach their full potential and contribute positively to their communities. The intervention aligns with Rwanda's adolescent health priorities and contributes to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 4 (Quality Education), and 5 (Gender Equality).

Sustainability

Sustainability is achieved through partnerships with schools, health facilities, local authorities, and community stakeholders. The initiative invests in strengthening school health clubs, developing peer educators, and enhancing the capacity of healthcare providers working in youth-friendly corners.

