Outcomes from the program in 2016
Based from schools in the Northern and Volta Region
Acknowledgments

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Thank You!
Linnea Claesdotter & Evelina Norvell
What is The World Starts With Me?

- It is a computer and right based comprehensive sexuality education for young people.
- It aims to contribute to the improvement of the sexual and reproductive health of young people and also to their social and economic development.

In 2013 the World Starts With Me programme (WSWM) got piloted in Ghana by Savana Signatures. It has since been implemented in 22 schools in the Northern, Upper West and Volta Regions. This document intends to state what different outcomes have been achieved since the implementation of the World Starts With Me.

Think Global Act Local

Savana Signatures is an exceptional example of a non governmental organisation that thinks global and act local. By integrating the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in the WWSM, the outcomes of the program can be well seen at a local level. This programs aligns with the SDG 3, “Good Health and Well-Being” and it puts extra focus in the following aspects:

- To ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes
- To end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical disease and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases

According to UNFPA November 2014 publication on Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health, for millions of young people in the world, the onset of adolescence brings not only changes to their bodies but also new vulnerabilities to human rights abuses, particularly in the areas of sexuality, marriage and child bearing. Millions of girls are coerced into unwanted sex or marriage, putting them at risk of unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, sexually transmitted infections including HIV and dangerous child birth.
Comprehensive Sexual Health Education is not part of the school curriculum in Ghana, as a result teachers are not trained on facilitation skills of sexuality education. This makes it difficult for teachers to facilitate healthy and safe discussions of sexual reproductive health issues. The students who participated in the WSWM have gained skills about their body changing, rights, and gained confident in expressing their opinion on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) issues.

What is your name?
- My name is Idris Rahma and I am a member of the World Starts With Me.

What have you been sharing with your peers from the WSWM lessons?
- I have shared many things with my friends. I have shared that when you are menstruating, you need to keep yourself clean by bathing twice a day and use a pad. I also shared about how to use a condom. If you want to have sex but you are not ready for a pregnancy you have to use a condom.

Myths and lack of knowledge in SRHR issues contributes to misguided information in Ghana today. Below are stated some of the most common misconceptions that WSWM addressed:

Friendship between the sexes
Many of the student believed that friendship with the opposite sex without sexual intercourse or other sexual activities was impossible.

"Before this program when we had break I sat with boys and my friends told me that one day I would be pregnant because of that. When we finished this program I learnt that girls can be friends with boys without having sexual intercourse"

Body changes during puberty/adolescence is normal
The students were not aware of puberty, and the body changes that comes during this time, before they participated in the programme.

"It helped me to feel good about myself (...) now I know that I can feel free and mention any part of my private parts"
**Know your rights and responsibilities**
Thanks to the WSWM program, the students got to know their rights and responsibilities. They are more confident and feel self-assured to educate their peers about it.

“The program helps to know about our rights and responsibilities. The right to education, the right to life, the right to attend any health facilities.”

**Protect yourself - Sexuality and love**
Students now know how to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancies, STIs and HIV/AIDS. Myths were discussed and cleared out and teenage pregnancies got reduced to zero.

“At first I thought you could get HIV from being friends with a HIV positive person. But I learned that you can be friends with HIV positive people without being infected. You can only get it through unprotected sexual intercourse or sharing of sharp objects.” “Pregnancy is not only for girls, it’s for both boys and girls”

**WSWM has led to a more open attitude towards SRHR issues amongst the participating students and has given them skills in discussing sexuality issues with others. Savana Signatures finds it important to extend the program to engage more students and community members.**

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**No reported teenage pregnancies**

*since the implementation of the World Starts With Me in the projects schools.*
The facilitators (voluntary teachers) of the program expressed that they felt shy talking about sexual health education before the implementation of the WSWM. But with the capacity development in the project on facilitation skills of sexuality education, the facilitators gained a new confidence.

“From me the program has helped me to add to the knowledge that I had involving issues concerning sexual and reproductive health. I added the new information to the little knowledge that I had and it has built my confidence as a teacher and as a facilitator whenever I’m handling issues or leading sexual education.”

The work the facilitators of the WSWM do is extremely valuable for the success of the programme and made voluntarily. The facilitators organise lessons after school hours because it is not a part of the curriculum. Out of 400 students*, only 60 students are able to participate in the WSWM annually in each school. Therefore, some of the facilitators found alternative ways to meet club members outside school hours to complete lessons. One of the teachers had this experience to share:

“During an assembly one will come and share what he or she has learnt in the WSWM with the entire school. So they use 5-10 mins to share ideas from WSWM with their colleagues. Sometimes it reminds those who are no longer a part of the WSWM, to keep on thinking about these things.”

This is Paul, a farmer and father of three children. He explained that he initially was reluctant towards talking about SRHR issues with adolescents, that it would cause more harm than good, but after the sensitization, he got another perspective:

“For me, the first time I thought that if you would let our children to know about these issues it would be dangerous. But when I started thinking, and when I passed the sensitisation, I know that it’s good, that we should let them know! To avoid the fire and provide a cool place to stay. So I believe it’s ok, people should start to talk about this with young ones”

As a part of the WSWM, community members and parents got the opportunity to participate in sensitization sessions about SRHR issues and the importance of sexual health education. Initially many were reluctant to the idea of educating children about these issues, however the sensitization made them realize the importance and the long term benefits from talking about it.

“You know in a Ghanaian setting, talking about sex and other developmental issues with children is not something we do. Society doesn’t really like that, it frowns on it. But after this program I don’t feel reluctant anymore to talk about it, I feel free.”

“I can remember my little girl coming to tell me ‘Dad I don’t have my menstruation pads, it’s finished’, formally she wouldn’t ask those things because she was too shy to come to us”

One parent shared that he now sells condoms in his shop. He also takes the opportunity to educate adolescents on how to use them. Parents also expressed that they now have a new trust in their children and that they no longer worry about them to get pregnant or bring an early pregnancy home. In respect to this community members and parents call out for more sensitization. Because in order to make a change at a community level, everyone needs to know of the benefits you gain from educating SRHR.

“You know that with the human being we are different. Some people will take it and some will not take it (...). It’s better that you would share it with other people so that they too can share it to others.”

*based on the amount of students in an average Junior High School in Ghana
Positive outcomes

As seen from the study

- Knowledge of SRHR issues, eg. how to protect yourself against unwanted pregnancy, STI’s, HIV and AIDS.
- Knowledge of your rights and responsibility, eg. confident to speak up for your rights.
- Knowledge of right and wrong facts within SRHR issues and therefore myths are killed.
- Strengthen the bond between parent/teacher and child/student.
- Reduced drop outs due to teenage pregnancy.
- Knowledge of SRHR issues at a community level.
- Knowledge of where to turn/seek help for sexual health issues.
- Adults have the understanding of why sexual health education is needed at a community level.

Long-term outcomes

Continuously developing and expanding the program will hopefully have these sustainable long-term outcomes

- Decrease the spread of STI’s and HIV/AIDS.
- More students will finish school.
- Increased gender equality.
- Improved knowledge about ICT.
- Ensure access to sexual and reproductive health-care services.
- Awareness of your rights and responsibilities, eg. right to say no to sexual abuse, right to education, empowerment, responsibility for family planning, responsibilities for you economy etc.

Challenges

More funding to the program could decrease the challenges listed below

- Only one of eight students gain skills from the program (based on 400 students/school).
- Few schools and communities are reached through the program.
- The need of more material, eg. at some schools there are 5 computers for 50 students.
- Lessons are facilitated outside school hours.
- The need to reach out to more students.

Percentage of students in a WSWM J.H.S based on the 400 students in each school
MAKE A RIGHT CHOICE FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

The World Starts With Me program is one of many examples of how Savana Signatures are working closely with UNDP’s Sustainable development goals. It is an evidence of why sexual health education in schools is important and need expansion to all schools in Ghana. For the long-term development within Ghana’s health care system, comprehensive sexual health education is an important part for a healthier society.

Through ICT and sexual health education, the young people in Ghana gained knowledge about the newest technology, SRHR issues and their rights and responsibilities, something that today is a must of a sustainable society and an ever changing world. This will lead Ghana and it’s inhabitants to a more developed, educated country and therefore strengthen the country’s welfare.
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