



## **Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (ASRHR) Training and Education Programme**

**Report September to December 2022**

### **Introduction**

Maternity Africa is Christian-based, non-governmental organisation and works from Kivulini Maternity Centre near the city of Arusha in Northern Tanzania. Maternity Africa is located in this area, specifically to serve the region's vulnerable and marginalized women and girls. All Maternity Africa's services are offered free of charge, so that 'no one will be left behind' on the basis of cost.

Acutely aware<sup>1</sup> of the lack of good education for young people about their sexual and reproductive health and rights, Maternity Africa established an Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (ASRHR) Training and Education Programme in mid-2022. Preparations for this programme started in July 2022 with staff recruitment, establishing relationships with the relevant local Government departments and schools, developing a training manual, and participating in a 'train-the trainer' course. The training manual consists of ten topics, starting from life skills (to establish a good basis of trust and rapport) followed by sexual and reproductive health related topics. The training events commenced in October 2022, the start of the new school year.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, ten Government schools were selected for the implementation of the ASRHR training programme for the 2022-23 school year: seven primary schools and three secondary schools (see Table 1). In the primary schools, Classes 5 to 7 (ages ranging from 10-14 years) will be trained and in the secondary schools, Classes 8 and 9 (pupils' ages ranging typically from 12-18 years<sup>2</sup>). All of the schools are in relatively close proximity to Kivulini Maternity Centre, helping to raise awareness of Maternity Africa and its mainstream maternal healthcare services in local communities.

During the 2022-23 school year, at least 20 lessons will be conducted at each school. Other than special occasions such as examination periods, the team of two taught a total of 10 lessons (two per day) at 10 schools each week.

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<sup>1</sup> Around 11% of the women who deliver their babies at Kivulini Maternity Centre are teenagers.

<sup>2</sup> It is not uncommon for older teenagers to attend more junior classes at school.

**Table 1. Schools in which training takes place**

Name	Level
Kimnyaki	Primary
Mringa	Primary
Emaoi	Primary
Ngaramtoni	Primary
Olmringiringa	Primary
Ilkonerei	Primary
JK Nyerere	Primary
Musa	Secondary
Losikito	Secondary
Likamba	Secondary

### **The project team**

Initially three experienced staff, including qualified teachers were hired to form the ASRRH team for this pilot, one-year project. Because of a sudden and significant change in her personal circumstances, one staff member left the team within one month.

The two remaining team members accomplished all planned activities (including conducting a baseline survey – a written questionnaire covering around 40 questions in connection with reproductive health among a sample of 698 adolescents<sup>3</sup>), although it was challenging for such a small team. We conducted another recruitment exercise,



and appointed two additional staff, so the team now comprises four people – three women and one man. Immediately before joining Maternity Africa, one of the new recruits previously worked for GLAMI<sup>4</sup>, an organisation that Maternity Africa is forming close links with. The two new staff members commenced employment start on 2 January 2023. Maternity Africa’s two in-house social workers also support the project as necessary.

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<sup>3</sup> The data collected during this baseline study are currently being analysed and will be reported on in due course. In the meantime, the responses are being used to help to tailor the training.

<sup>4</sup> See <https://glami.or.tz/>.

## Training in-school adolescents

From October to December 2022, the ASRHR team delivered 60 training sessions in the ten above-named schools, one training every week per school until the school holidays started. A total of 2,026 in-school adolescents participated in these training sessions, of which 894 are boys and 1,132 are girls. We covered the following topics from the Government-approved syllabus (with examples of discussions and questions related to the topics):

- *Skill of knowing and living with oneself.* Boys said that this topic taught them that they can be a great help to peer girl students. “Sometimes, girls are being ‘disturbed’ by motorcycle riders and we [the boys] previously did and said nothing to help them. But today we know that even walking with the girls during our way to and from school will help them to be more confident and safer.”
- *Self-esteem, values, and self-efficacy.* During discussions in this second topic one of the girls asked: “If I am confident enough and a member of the family abuses me and I want to report that case where can I report? How about the consequences of reporting that person? What if the same person came back to me and wanted revenge?” The ASRHR team discussed that adolescents experience abuse and violence, because they lack trustworthy people to confide in. They explained that there are ways to report the perpetrators anonymously and confidentially. The team offered support by providing the specific numbers to call or send a message to the responsible Government Organisations.
- *Basic communication skills.* Students did not understand the importance of having good communication skills. They were asking: “Is there any better way of communicating differently from the way we are used to doing so?” We discussed with them that every word, behaviour and attitude you show in communication sends a message to the receiver. Also using good communication is one of the ways of developing self-confidence.
- *Child rights.* Most of the young people were unaware of their rights and how and where to claim when their rights are being violated. A lot of students asked questions like “How can I go to the police and accuse my father, brother, or uncle? Will my life be in more danger as a result?” The team educated students on how violence continues to exist, because people do not break its circle. We also educated them about the relevant official authorities that are dealing and managing the issues and cases involving children and young people.
- *Effective decision-making skills.* One of the students gave his testimony on a very difficult decision he made. He is proud that he did not lose hope. He said: “Because of my [relatively older] age my friends and family discouraged me to continue with secondary education and advised me to drop out of school. I told myself that I will continue with school, it does not matter if I will be the oldest person in my class.”

- *Changes taking place during adolescence.* There were many questions asked during this topic, showing that in-depth knowledge about this subject is lacking, for example questions related to menstruation and becoming pregnant.

### **Training out-of-school adolescents**

In December, after schools closed, the ASRHR team started training out-of-school adolescents in two local orphanages, Shalom and Amani that mainly care for street children. There was a number of young girls (aged 15-17), who had already delivered a child. So far, the team provided ten training sessions at these orphanages to 65 adolescents, 15 boys and 50 girls. The topics covered for these out-of-school adolescents were:

- Basic communication skills
- Child rights
- Puberty
- Gender-based violence
- Violence against children



Also, among these adolescents there appears to be a large gap in knowledge relating to bodily changes during puberty, how puberty can affect behaviour and many questions around menstruation (such as, will you menstruate until you die?) and how a woman gets pregnant.

### **Teenage pregnancies**

So far, the ASRHR team has identified three pregnant teenage girls and brought them to Maternity Africa's Kivulini Maternity Centre for antenatal care and delivery. Two of the teenage girls had dropped out of school because of their pregnancies. One of them, a 14-year-old girl, safely delivered a healthy baby boy at the Centre. She receives ongoing support from Maternity Africa's social workers. The team also recently brought a 16-year-old out-of-school girl to the Centre for maternal healthcare.

### **Other activities**

The team distributed a sample of around 20 reusable, washable menstrual health packs to a number of girls at the schools and orphanages on a trial basis, to assess their effectiveness. A group of volunteers, based in The Netherlands, produced, and provided these packs, and plans to respond to feedback from these girls, with a view to adjusting its design as necessary, producing more packs, and training women in Tanzania<sup>5</sup> how to make them.

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<sup>5</sup> Potentially including some of Maternity Africa's inpatients.



### **Planned activities for the next six months**

Overall, we plan to increase our activities ‘in the classroom, online and on the airwaves’.

- Orientation and training of the two new staff members, including ‘train-the-trainer’ training.
- The ASRHR team will continue to provide the weekly training sessions at the ten schools, covering the remaining topics that are more specific to SRHR:
  - o Gender and gender roles
  - o Types of violence, violence against children and effects of violence
  - o Pregnancy, early marriage, and female genital mutilation
  - o Sexual transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS
- More out-of-school adolescents will be trained on ASRHR. As the team is now twice the size (four people), the capacity to identify and harness opportunities for training out-of-school adolescents and provide these trainings has increased.
- Produce topical, live radio broadcasts on local radio stations (including, hopefully, the opportunity for live, on-air phone-ins).
- Establish partnering arrangements with other organisations that serve similar beneficiary groups.
- Develop and increase social media presence, including producing some small documentary films that show the project in action<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Subject to sufficient funding, in due course we may also produce short, content-specific training films for uploading to, for example, a dedicated YouTube channel and other media, to reach wider audiences.