Facilitation Methods

The methodologies used in a Process Oriented Approach are mostly participatory and involve group interaction. This is important as people are able to listen and learn from each other’s experience and thus broaden their own views of the world. Participants often work in small groups on specially designed activities that are intended to develop their understanding of key issues, as well as to develop skills such as information processing, critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and teamwork. Skills development is as important as increasing knowledge. Without this skills component, new knowledge may not translate into people making choices to change their behaviour, which is the primary aim of this kind of transformational education.

In traditional approaches to pedagogy, teaching involves telling information to students; building knowledge is about transmitting facts; and learning is about remembering these facts. In the Process Oriented Approach, teaching involves enabling the participants; knowledge is built on understanding; and learning involves the active construction of ideas by the participants.

Process Oriented Approach is focused around facilitation, where the facilitator takes the participants through a process of gathering information and building on previous experiences, knowledge, beliefs and misconceptions. Through this approach, participants teach the facilitator by revealing their understanding of the content. This is why POA process uses the term facilitator, as opposed to trainer.

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“A our experience from working with SRHR and CSE&I is that if we really and fully want to understand sexuality, HIV and AIDS, gender and femininity/masculinity we also have to see the link between sexuality and gender, as sexuality is an integral part of our identity and influences how we construct gender roles and masculinity/femininity. One of the strongest indicators for our own way of looking at our gender role as well as the society’s expectations/confirmation of us as a woman, man or transgender is linked to sexuality and how we express it. Together sexuality and gender influences HIV and AIDS, both when it comes to the continued spread of HIV and the care and support for People Living with HIV (PLWH).” Janne Nordstedt 2014
Linking POA to Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Sexuality education must include more than just facts and information, because people’s perceptions and behaviour relating to sexuality are deeply rooted, complex and need to be addressed. A long-term process of sensitisation, reflection, follow-up, peer support and mentoring is needed in order to bring about healthy behaviour change in relation to sexual activity.

It is easy to adopt an adult perspective on sexuality and to forget what it was like to be young and possibly confused about these issues. Sexuality also includes issues of:

- identity
- sex
- reproduction
- love
- self-image
- self-esteem

For this reason, the Process Oriented Approach takes people back to explore their own experiences and feelings about sexuality.

To become better facilitators of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) education, facilitators need to start with themselves. This focus on the individual means that sensitive issues will often be confronted. The Process Oriented Approach focuses on providing non-judgmental information and respecting individual differences through promoting non-discrimination.

The approach is also comprehensive, meaning that a broad range of topics are covered, including:

- falling in love
- body knowledge
- lust
- positive sexuality
- condoms and contraception
- prostitution
- abortion
- rape
- abuse
- sexual identity

Understanding all of these issues and how one feels about them better equips one to make informed and healthy choices about their own sexuality. Sensitive issues are deliberately included to ensure that stigma, discrimination and exclusion are challenged in the interests of upholding human rights.

What is POA?

Save the Children has adopted an approach to sexuality education, which is known as the Process Oriented Approach to Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (POA). The POA is targeted at the adult community, which has been highlighted to be a critical stakeholder in Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Information discourse. This approach involves each person going on a personal journey, and includes a great deal of introspection, personal reflection and the internalisation of concepts in order for participants to fully understand how they feel about the issues that are included in comprehensive sexuality education. The key to this approach is changing mind-sets regarding issues of sexuality and gender, to internalise thinking about these issues and to challenge entrenched ways of thinking. This approach is built on years of field experience, where it has been found that sexuality education provided by those who have had the opportunity to go through this personal process is non-judgmental, more realistic and youth friendly when compared to other approaches, and is therefore more effective.

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\[ Janne Nordstedt, a sexuality education advisor and trainer based in Sweden, with extensive experience in Africa, has developed this Process Oriented Approach. Save the Children Sweden in Zambia piloted the approach and three-phase training programme between 2007 and 2009 in consultation with Janne Nordstedt. \]