

Adolescent Health Programming in Vocational Education Programs: *Experience from Zanzibar*

The national vocation education and training policy adopted by the Vocational Education and Training Department (VETD) of Zanzibar includes an adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH) component and integrates Life Planning Skills (LPS) curriculum into vocational education centers. AYA has worked closely with VETD to support these efforts.

Why Vocational Education Centers?

- There are 70 vocational education centers in Zanzibar, 20 percent of which are government run.
- Many young people attend such centers, yet few efforts have been made to support ASRH programming in livelihoods programs.

ASRH Programming: A Critical Need

- Youth under 19 constitute more than half the population of Zanzibar (2002 census).
- Since 1986, there has been a marked escalation of reported numbers and rate of HIV infection on the islands of Zanzibar.
- School drop out rates after age 15 are high. This is due to a variety of reasons including poverty, child labor, and limited capacity to accommodate students in existing institutions.
- Youth often seek vocational education training to acquire job skills.
- Limited employment options due to a poorly developed economy largely dependent on agriculture and tourism, both of which are in decline.



map courtesy of zanzibar.net

Integration of LPS: A Two-Stage Approach

- Encourage VETD to include life-planning skills in its policy.
- Work with the VETD and six individual vocational education and training centers to pilot integration of life-planning skills training into their curricula and activities.

Looking Forward: Beyond the Pilot Program

- Teachers are enthusiastic and committed.
- Young people are overwhelmingly positive about the program - pleased and grateful that they have the chance to learn about and discuss topics they normally could not.
- Youth also respond positively to the use of participatory methods.
- In 2004, an additional 19 vocational education centers integrated life-planning skills into their curricula.

“Lives are at stake, and we have a responsibility to treat all these students as if they were our own children.”

Dr. Jdrissa M. Hijja, Director of the VETD