Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) Professional Development for Teachers of Learners with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific

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Overview of research

- Research funded by UNESCO, looking at how teachers can be supported to deliver disability-inclusive Comprehensive Sexuality Education [CSE] in the Asia-Pacific region.

- Areas investigated include:
    - Quality of teacher training resources
    - Teacher experiences of disability-inclusive CSE in the classroom
    - Teacher perceptions of their role and wider support for CSE needed

- CSE is *"a curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical, and social aspects of sexuality. It aims to equip children and young people with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that will empower them to realize their health, well-being and dignity, develop respectful social relationships, consider the well-being of others affected by their choices, and understand and act upon their rights throughout their lives".* (UNESCO, 2018).

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Desk Review and Resource Mapping
- Review of key global, regional and country research literature (Mongolia, Nepal, the Philippines ["focal countries"]) on disability and CSE
- Mapping of selected global, regional, and focal country teacher training resources to assess the comprehensiveness of training resources in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Review of indicative key statistics on disability and education in the three focal countries.

Primary Data Collection
- *Regional:* Quantitative survey (Teachers N = 3921) and key informant interviews (N = 4)
- *Mongolia, Nepal & The Philippines*: Qualitative key informant interviews (Policymakers, teachers; N = 42)/FGDs (Parents N = 82 and Students with disabilities N =79)

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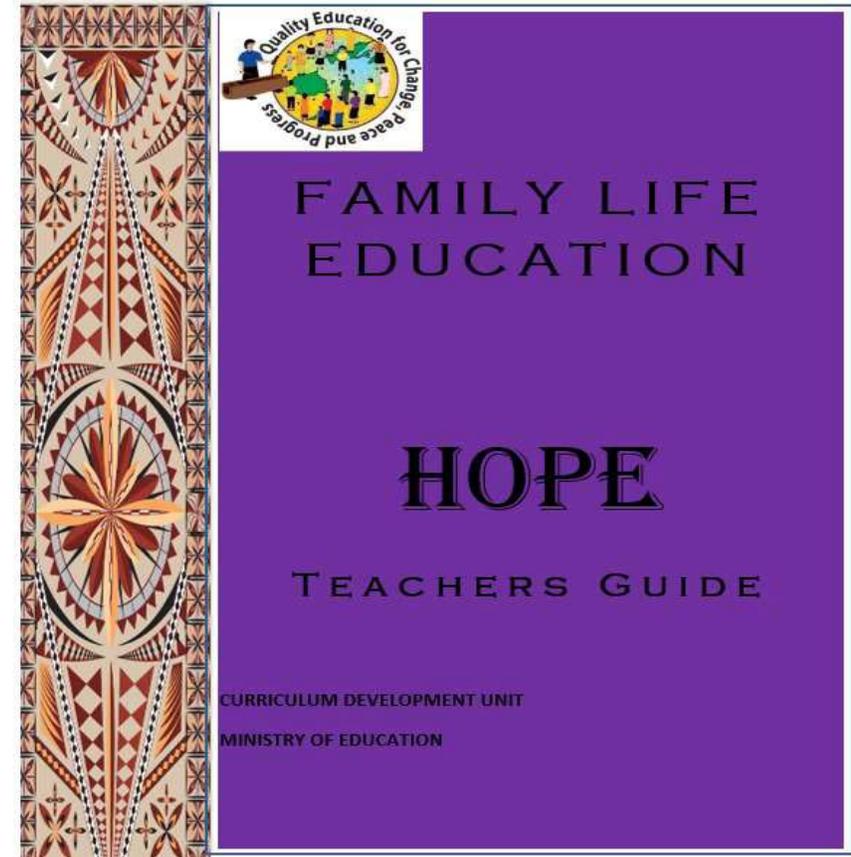# Lack of comprehensiveness of regional teacher training resources

- There are few teacher training resources covering disability and CSE comprehensively in the region. Where these exist, resources need to be better aligned to international technical guidance and there are missed opportunities to join up guidance with other in-country resources.

- Caveat: Searches at regional level limited to English language only
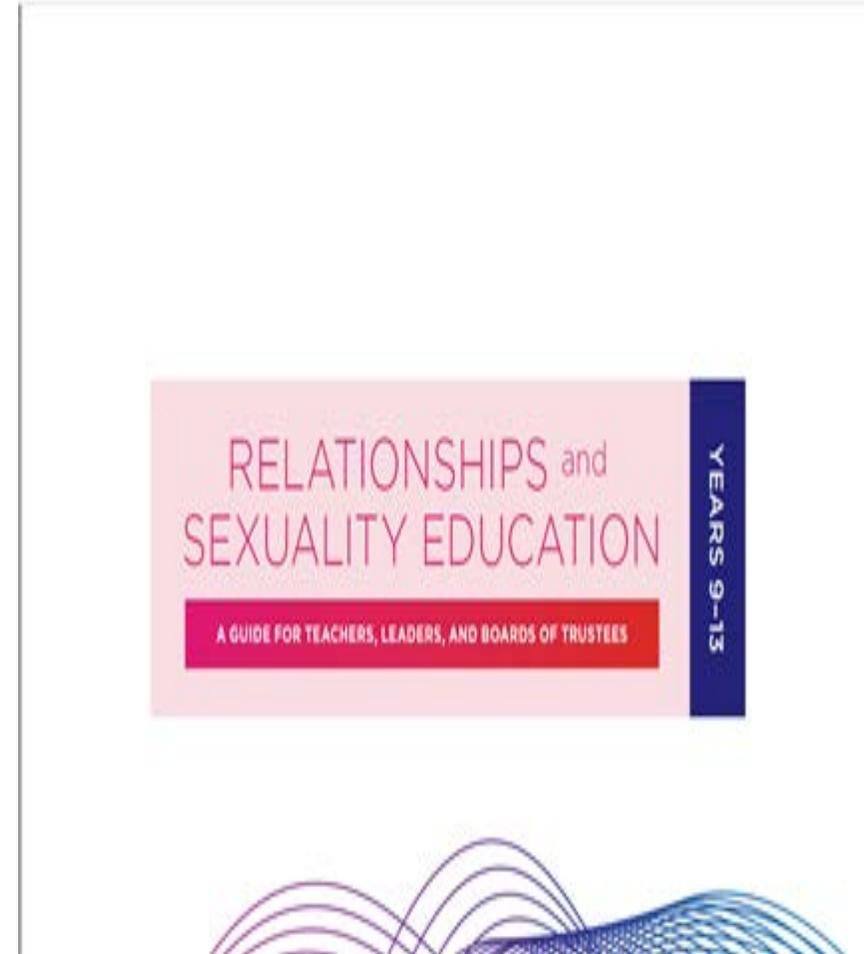

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- Recognition of disability as a risk factor for bullying, but not dealt with via a rights-based approach:

  "Never be ashamed of an illness or disability. The sooner you feel okay with it, other people will too".
  (Family Life Education: Teachers Resource Book, 2015; MoE Fiji p.111. Instruction to convey to students who experience bullying).

- Teachers using the Family Life Education guidance are not directed to the disability training manual issued by the Fiji MoE to support their work, which is a missed opportunity.

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Examples from training resource review (New Zealand)

- Disability and other intersecting marginalized identities (e.g., LGBTQI+) are effectively mainstreamed across this guidance:

- *Gender norming plays out in the disability community, just like it does in society more generally. Disabled women and girls face different barriers from disabled men and boys.* (Office for Disability Issues, (2016, p. 14, as cited in New Zealand Ministry of Education (2020a, p. 37))

- *Toilets and changing rooms can be unsafe environments for many ākonga [learners], especially those who don't identify as male or female. Disabled ākonga may also be gender or sexually diverse.* (New Zealand Ministry of Education (2020a), p. 20)

- Most crucially, the guidance directs and links teachers to New Zealand's inclusive education resources

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Teachers need impairment specific support and sensitisation, especially for non-physical disabilities

- Most teachers in the regional survey reported that delivering CSE to learners with disabilities was difficult, but generally teachers felt better prepared and had more experience teaching CSE to learners with physical impairments, relative to all other impairment groups.

"*While teaching deaf students using sign language, we only teach words but if we had access to ICT and the other visual media like TV we could deliver CSE more effectively*"
Special Education Teacher, Nepal

Since we receive information based on our vision, it would be good to provide information in the form of videos. Sign language skills are most important, as well as facial expressions"
Student with a hearing impairment, Mongolia

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Teachers need wider support beyond school, particularly parental engagement

Parental and wider stakeholder engagement in students' CSE was perceived by teachers as crucial, for example, because some learners regularly seek sexual health information outside of school (e.g., Internet) or have been engaging in remote learning due to school closures:

"As a teacher of the hearing impaired, I believe that parents should be the first to be educated about issues of sexuality."

KII, Special education teacher, Philippines

"The parents rarely communicate with us about their child. They have never shown any concern on this subject (CSE) and the learning of their child. I feel like they have little knowledge on it and if we could provide the parents with the knowledge on the topic that would help to develop positive perceptions."

KII, CSE teacher, Nepal

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"Students often reported that their parents scold them on look at pictures of the reproductive parts and talking about it. One incident happened to me while conducting an online class. While I was teaching online, one of the parents spoke a very negative vulgar word to me. I was giving the lesson to the child on safe sex, and use of condoms, etc. That made me upset and I understood that these topics are unacceptable. "

KII CSE Teacher, Nepal

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Key selected recommendations

1. Develop regional level teacher training guidance on disability inclusive CSE and scale up promising resources in the region (including linking national CSE resources to national disability policies and IE guidance).

2. Prioritize the development of targeted classroom aids and resources to deliver CSE to learners with severe or multiple disabilities (particularly visual, hearing, intellectual, communication and psychosocial disabilities)

3. Extend CSE training and sensitization to the wider community (i.e. to parents/caregivers, particularly those of learners with disabilities) to increase their support for CSE and reinforce the CSE learning that happens in the classroom

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