

FAMILY LIFE AND HIV EDUCATION (FLHE) CURRICULUM IN NIGERIA: WHY BOTHER?

Presentation Outline

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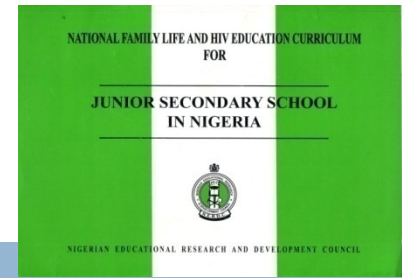
- Profile of Young People's Sexual Health in Nigeria
- What is FLHE and Its Goals?
- Lessons from the Curriculum's Implementation
- Why Should the Media Bother?

Profile of Young People's Sexual Health in Nigeria

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- ***Early sexual initiation is commonplace:*** By the end of their teenage years, 8 out of 10 young people have initiated sexual intercourse and these sexual encounters are generally sporadic and without protection
- ***High vulnerability to HIV infection:*** More than half of all new HIV infections occur in people under the age of 25 with girls being disproportionately affected. Young girls aged 15-19 are 3-4 times more likely to be HIV-positive compared to boys the same age
- ***Unplanned and unwanted pregnancies:*** Hospital-based studies show that 3 out of 5 patients with unsafe abortion-related complications are adolescents and many of these complications result in death or permanent infertility.
- ***Young girls are prime targets of sexual abuse:*** The true extent of sexual abuse prevalence remains unknown because much of it goes unreported.

The FLHE Curriculum



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The National Family Life and HIV Education (FLHE) Curriculum was approved by the 49th session of the National Council on Education in 2002 as the education sector's key response to preventing and mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS among in-school youths in Nigeria

What is FLHE and the Curriculum

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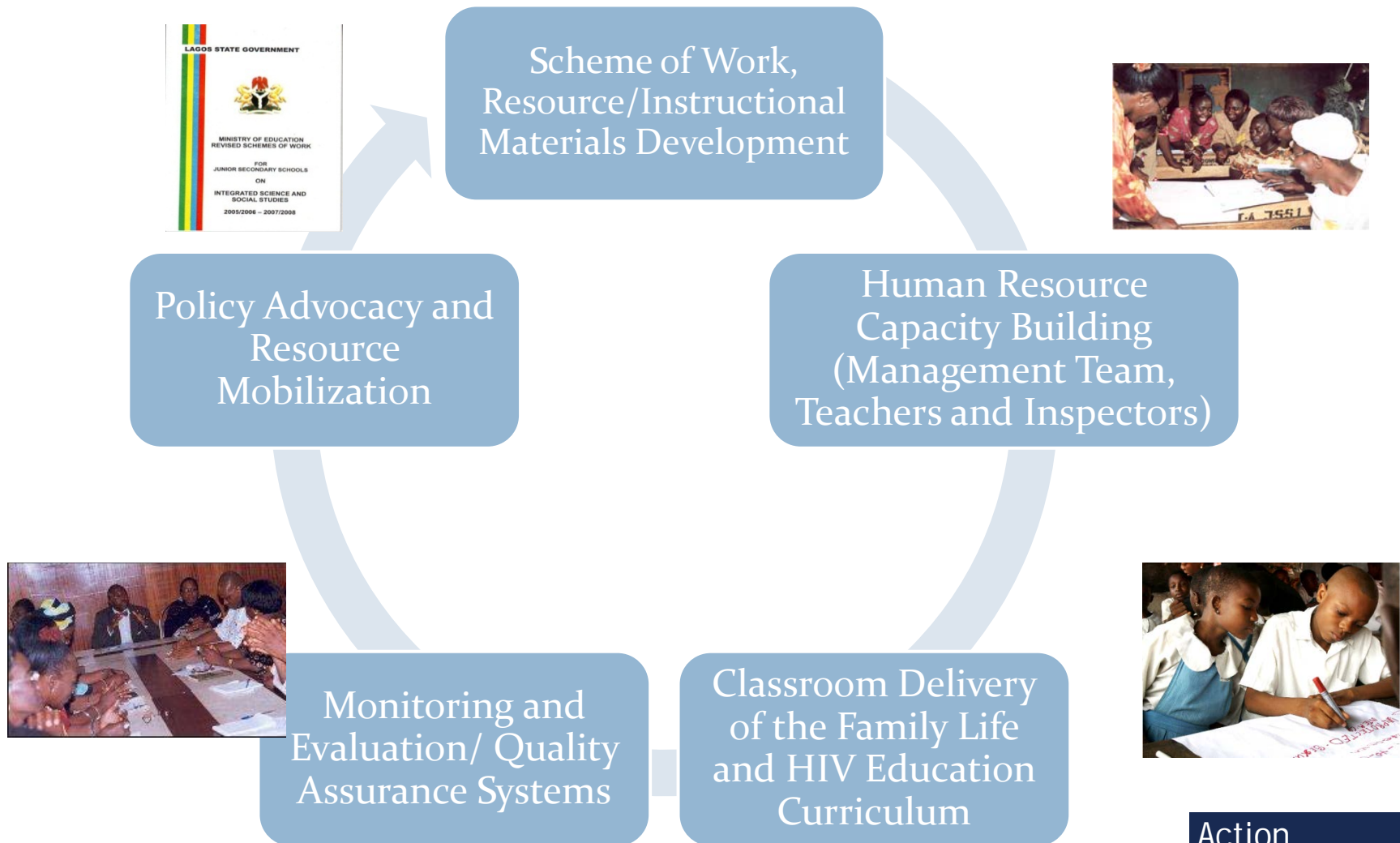
The Family Life and HIV Education Curriculum is a planned process of education that fosters the acquisition of factual information, formation of positive attitudes, beliefs and values, as well as development of skills that empower young people to become sexually healthy adults.

Goals of the FLHE Curriculum

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- **Information:** Provision of accurate information about human sexuality;
- **Attitudes, Values and Insights:** Provision of opportunities for learners to question, explore and assess their sexual attitudes and develop their own values;
- **Skills:** Equipping learners with interpersonal skills, including communication, decision-making, assertiveness and refusal skills;
- **Responsibility:** Provision of opportunities to learn about exercising responsibility, resisting pressures to become prematurely involved in sexual activity, taking protective sexual health measures, preventing sexual abuse/violence.

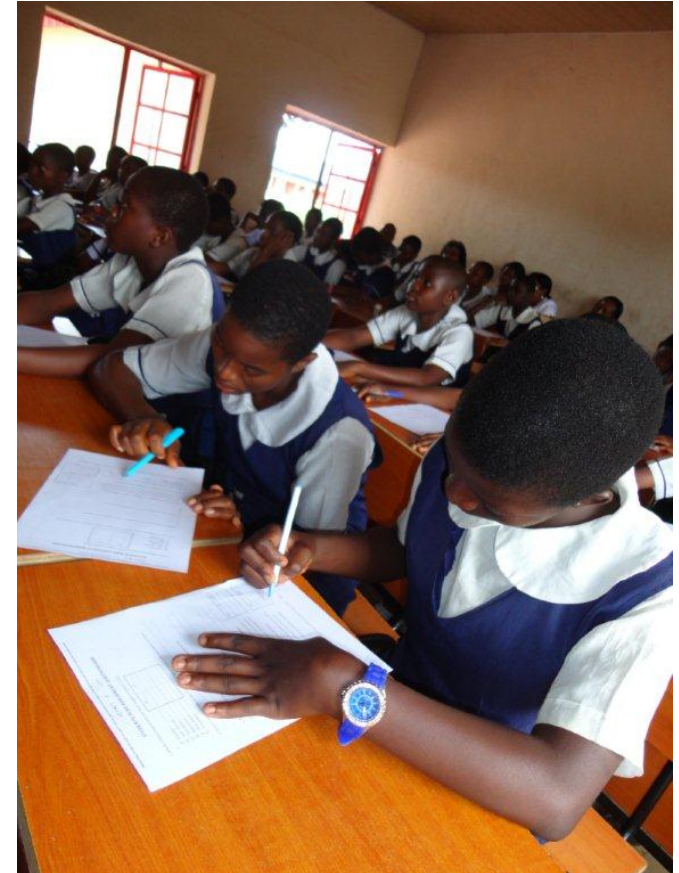
Key Intervention Areas for FLHE Curriculum Implementation in Lagos



Key Impact Areas Documented in 2005-2009 Lagos State FLHE Study

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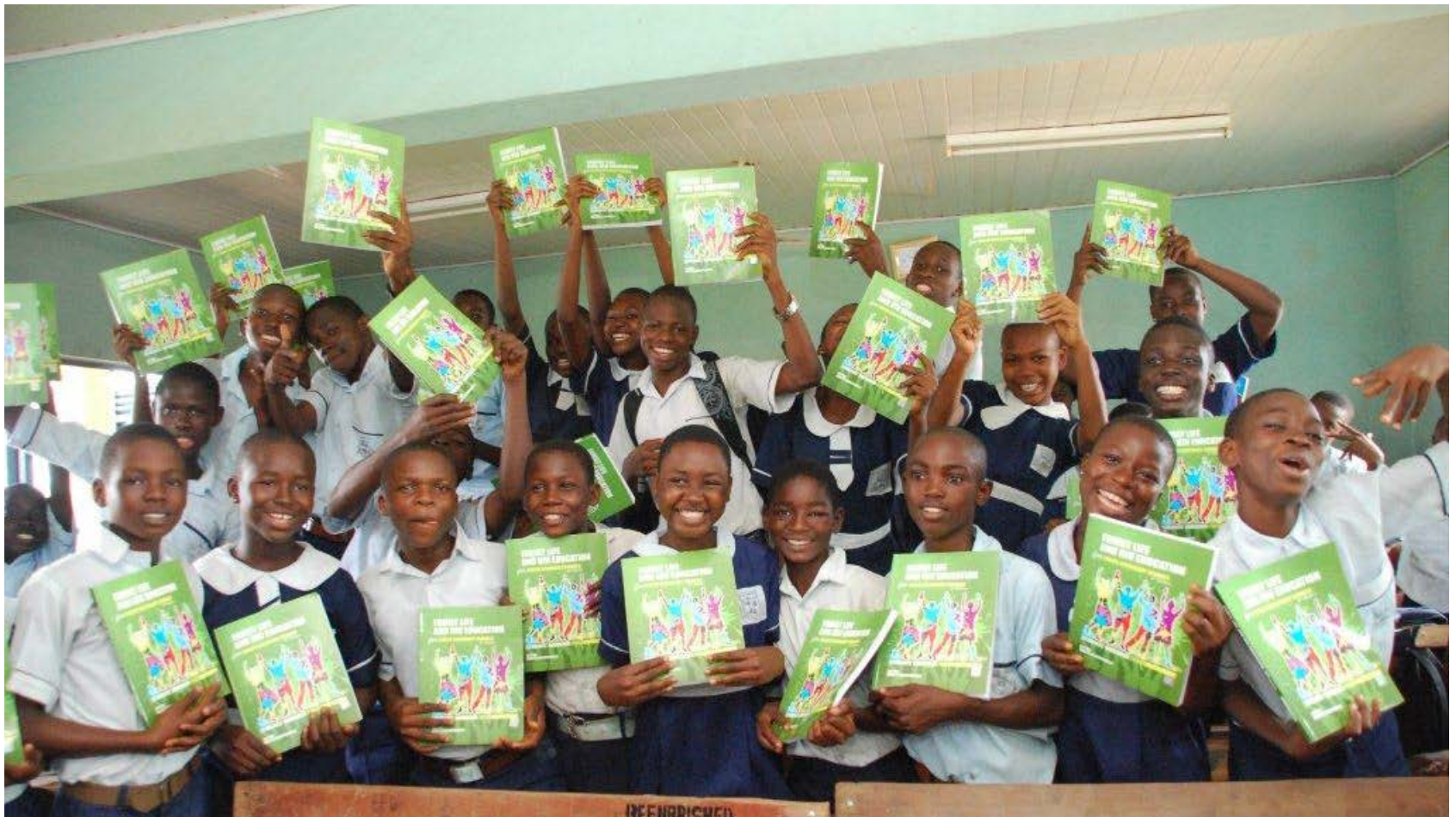
- ❑ Higher knowledge score about sexuality and reproductive health issues
- ❑ Expression of gender equitable attitudes
- ❑ Ability to resist sexual pressure
- ❑ Boys being less likely to pressure girls to have sex and
- ❑ Girls ability to say no to boys in intimate situations



(African Journal of Reproductive Health 2009; 13[3]:37-46).

Evidence-based Advocacy Advances FLHE Programming

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The Continuing Challenge of Coming to Terms with Adolescent Sexuality

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- ❑ Adolescents are not asexual; sexual expression is a normative part of their sexual development
- ❑ Societal norms that seek to control young people's sexuality often have a negative impact on their physical and emotional wellbeing
- ❑ The denial of adolescent sexuality and the attendant unwillingness to provide education and non-judgmental guidance continues to place adolescents, especially girls at more risk

FLHE Curriculum in Nigeria: Why Bother?

It is worthy of your attention and action

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□ It is a “population” issue:

Two-thirds of Nigeria’s total population are young people aged 24 years and under [i.e. about 120 million people].

□ It is a “health” issue:

More than half of all new HIV infections occur in people under the age of 25, with girls being disproportionately affected.

□ It is a “human rights” issue:

Many people especially young women and girls, face human rights abuses on a daily basis, including gender-based violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and limitations on their mobility, education, employment, & participation in public life.

FLHE Curriculum in Nigeria: Why Bother?

The Media has important roles to play

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□ Factual Reporting of FLHE Issues:

Contributes significantly to educating various audiences about their sexual and reproductive health

□ Avoid Sensational Reporting:

Distorted reporting can lead to confusion and negative reactions among the public and various stakeholders

□ Contribute to a Cultural Change Agenda:

Do not glamorize or glorify irresponsible sexual behaviour. Play your part by not playing down on issues of sexual harassment/abuse or apportioning blame to a vulnerable person

It Takes: Strategy, Courage and Resources



Graphic Illustration : Courtesy WHO, 2016April

Strategy: Informed & Creative

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- Evidence-driven reporting:
 - Poor youth SRH profile
 - Evidence of efficacious solutions from national/ global arena
- Alliance-building with kindred actors for louder voice and legitimacy:
 - NGOs, Government Agencies, Professional Groups and Religious Organizations who are supportive

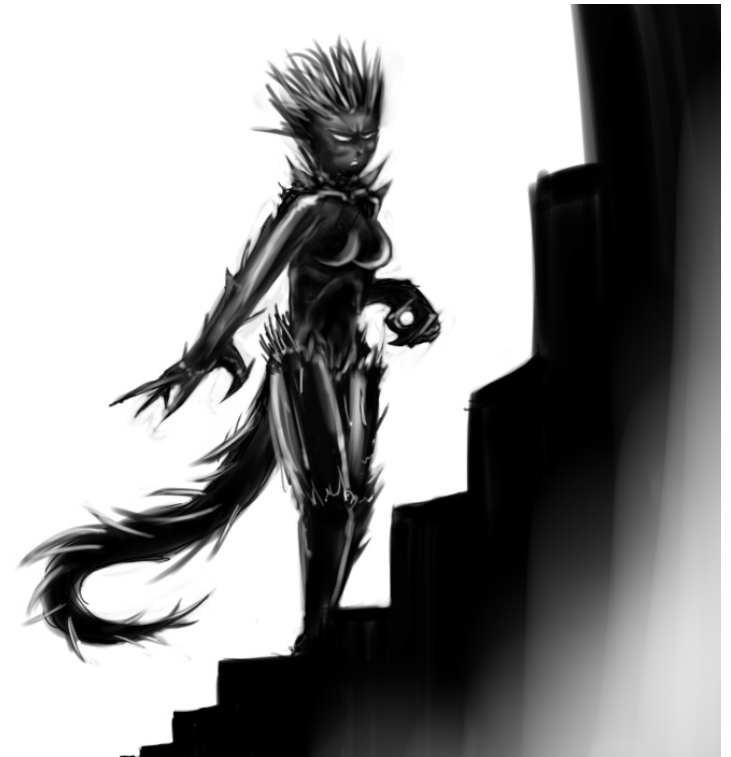


Courage: In the face of being villainized

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- Willingness to confront the opposition's scare tactics:
 - Fight the lies with facts
 - Position your media organizations as a credible resource for researchers, and the wider community of concerned citizens

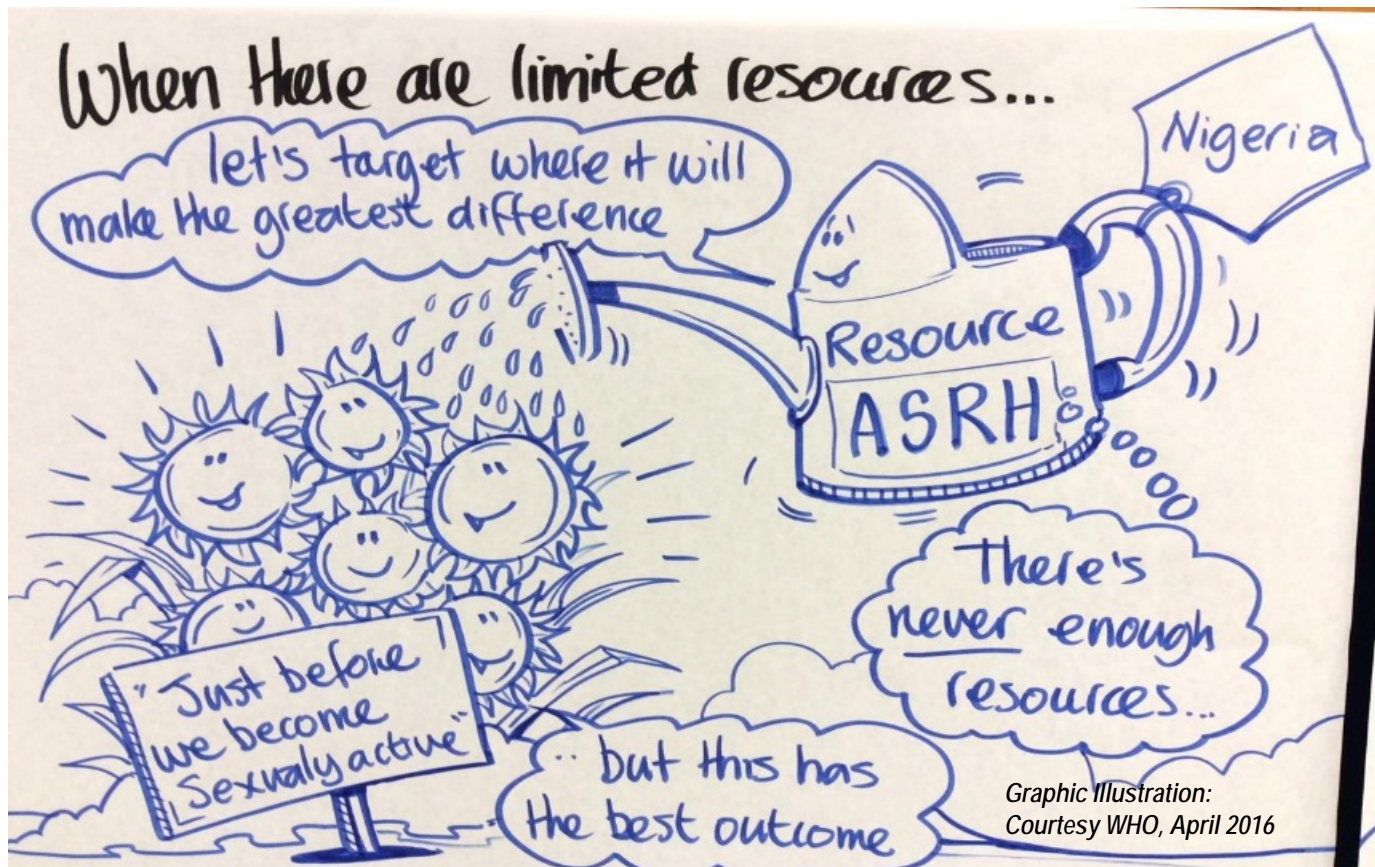
- Be prepared to play the “values” card too:
 - You have a place on the “moral high ground” – take it!



Resourcing: A key tool for the diffusion of innovation

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- Cultivate resource points with a long-term view of change
- Make strategic and smart resourcing alliances



Issues the media can focus on for improved FLHE programming:

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What mechanisms are being put in place to support FLHE Curriculum implementation within the education system?

- **School preparedness:** Are school administrators all aware of the FLHE integration into the scheme of work for carrier subjects e.g. Social Studies and Basic Science? Are they supportive of its implementation?
- **Teacher training and support:** Have FLHE carrier subject teachers in the schools been trained and do they have the opportunity to participate in periodic refreshers?
- **Availability of FLHE resource materials:** Do teachers and learners have access to teaching aids, books and other resources to facilitate effective teaching and learning?
- **Monitoring for Quality Assurance:** Is there any oversight being provided to ensure that lessons plans are developed and teachers adhere to provisions made for FLHE in the scheme of work? etc