

Influence of the implementation of an educational program on sexual and reproductive rights in children and adolescents at the community of the Guamote canton

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Abstract

When defining the sexual and reproductive rights of children and adolescents, there is a lack of in-depth discussion at the social level. Therefore, the research objective was to identify the influence of the application of an educational program on sexual and reproductive rights in children and adolescents at the community level in the Guamote canton. The information was collected through a survey of 65 children and adolescents, evaluating socio-demographic characteristics, knowledge and practices. As a result, a 55.38% lack of knowledge about the concept of reproductive rights was identified, which led to the design of an educational program on sexual and reproductive rights.

Keywords: Sexual rights, reproductive rights, educational program

Resumen

Al definir los derechos sexuales y reproductivos en niñas, niños y adolescentes se evidencia una falta de discusión a profundidad a nivel social. El objetivo de la investigación fue identificar la influencia en la aplicación de un programa educativo sobre derechos sexuales y reproductivos en niñas, niños y adolescentes a nivel comunitario en el cantón Guamote. El levantamiento de información fue mediante una encuesta realizada a 65 niñas, niños y adolescentes evaluando, características socio demográficas, conocimientos y prácticas sobre la temática. Donde se identificó un desconocimiento del 55,38% sobre el concepto de derechos reproductivos por lo que se concluye con el diseño de un programa educativo sobre derechos sexuales y reproductivos.

Palabras clave: Derecho sexual, derecho reproductivo, programa educativo.

INTRODUCTION

Sexual and reproductive health and rights have been treated as a constraint within highly problematic health systems, with little recognition of their centrality to people, health and overall well-being. This approach is rooted in cultural and political sensitivities related to sexuality, reproductive choice and gender inequality. For individuals seeking to live a healthy, fulfilling life and achieve their full development, their sexual and reproductive rights must be fulfilled and respected (Starrs & Anderson, 2016, p. 7).

At present, substantial progress has been made in sexual and reproductive health at the international level; in developing countries, sexual health and reproductive health are social issues that, in recent times, have taken a significant interest. These rights are composed of some areas in which notoriously is evident the inability of the existing regulation to guarantee certain rights during minority, but also the distance of a theory that allows establishing human rights at this stage of life (Dela Cruz, 2018, p. 27).

Thus, when attempting to define sexual and reproductive rights, the lack of an in-depth discussion on the rights of children and adolescents is evident because while some positions require their ownership, especially for adolescents, of some of these rights, such as access to updated and quality scientific information, the limitation for this same age group of some other related rights is still justified, for example, to marry at an age that society considers inappropriate or the time at which they should start an active sexual life (Martínez et al. 2019, p.4).

Sexual and reproductive rights are essential components of human, social and labor development. This area acquires a special significance in adolescence and the rights facing sexuality in children and adolescents. There are elements that they face, such as family, behavior and acceptance in social groups, somatic and hormonal changes, and desire for independence, which establish their behavior and subsequent development.

This is analyzed by José Ortiz (2009), who states that within the nationalities and indigenous peoples of Ecuador, a series of factors influence

sexual and reproductive rights, such as cultural values, clothing, language, and religion, among others, which leads to differences in knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding sexual and reproductive rights (p. 25-34).

The national and intersectoral strategy of family planning in adolescents ENIPLA since 2009 has worked on issues of sexuality in different parts of Ecuador; despite the work done by health professionals, pregnancies, STIs, and sexual violence have not decreased. For this reason, Plan Internacional and its sexual rights program emphasize fulfilling sexual and reproductive rights in vulnerable age groups. Based on the situational diagnosis and looking for answers to the sexual and reproductive rights of children and adolescents, the need to carry out an application and educational program to contribute to the integral development of their sexuality has been identified.

DEVELOPMENT

The realities of sexual and reproductive rights of children and adolescents in Ecuador

Ecuador is a democratic, sovereign, multiethnic and multicultural state governed by the rule of law that guarantees the right to health as a fundamental right, linked to the exercise of other rights, which support the good life (Constitution 2008, Art. 32). The exercise of sexual and reproductive rights is fundamental for the exercise of people's human rights. Its definition and the normative framework that supports it constitute the realization of the most important demands of the social movement and the agreements of the international conferences on population and development. The recovery of rights over the body, sexuality and reproduction as an exercise of freedom and guarantee of human development contributes to improving the quality of life (Rodén et al., 2020, p. 3-4).

Ecuador shows the persistence of several problems that mainly affect women and girls as a result of gender inequalities, non-compliance with the right to reproductive freedom and the presence of gender violence, which is why there are persistent social and economic gaps for women to

access health services among other aspects, the issue of women continues to be the axis of inequalities (García, 2013, p. 1).

Ecuador is one of several Latin American countries that has significantly improved access to health care and reduced inequalities in the last decade and a half (Granda and Jiménez, 2019, p. 2-3). Despite this general progress, there are very few studies that analyze sexual and reproductive health and in particular with the care of children and adolescents, and even worse, there are no analyses of psychosocial factors that mention inequality for the information provided in the rural sector of Ecuador.

Sexual and reproductive rights decades ago have not become representative in the indigenous communities of Ecuador; perhaps because of these factors that are not respected, there is the current problem, ignorance in the vast majority but above all, the lack of interest to assume them responsibly (Mengjia et al., 2019, p. 3).

Although regulatory frameworks reflect the exercise of sexual and reproductive rights assumed in different national and international commitments, services and strategies for this purpose have not yet been established (García, 2013, p. 5).

The emergence of HIV-AIDS infection led to significant changes in all human fields, one of the questions that the infection brought with it refers to the sexual rights of people; in part, they arise as a result of the intolerance that was presented to sexual minorities by both health teams and society. As a result, it has been suggested that the sexual and reproductive rights of recent conceptualization are the same human rights interpreted from sexuality and reproduction (Ayobami et al., 2022, p. 6).

It has been said that sexual and reproductive rights are the most human of all rights and represent the fundamental pillar for the exercise of citizenship, understood beyond the simple possibility of making decisions in the public sphere (electing and being elected), as it implies the possibility of women and men to make autonomous decisions about their bodies and lives in the fields of sexuality and reproduction (Bru, 2013).

In order to build a society where the fulfillment of rights as human beings is evidenced, especially in sexual and reproductive rights, it is necessary to work with all the institutions present in each of the sectors where the problem stands out without leaving aside the state, since it is responsible for the fulfillment of each one of them.

For these reasons, this article has as a priority to work with this group of children and adolescents in order to raise the level of knowledge about sexual and reproductive rights as an integral part of the training and development of each of them, as well as to raise awareness of basic issues of sexuality, the fulfillment of each of these rights that is the direct responsibility of the state for which it has contributed with the necessary and updated information for compliance.

In this way, it is intended to educate, create awareness of the importance of the subject and denaturalize the erroneous information that has been given for generations, mainly in fulfilling each of the sexual and reproductive rights.

Methodology

This research was developed in the San Miguel de Pomachaca, Guamote canton, province of Chimborazo, from October 2014 to March 2015. With a population of 65 children and adolescents sponsored by Plan International of the community. A survey was conducted to evaluate data on socio-demographic characteristics (age, sex, marital status and religious beliefs), knowledge about sexual and reproductive rights (sexual rights, reproductive rights, sexual health and reproductive health) and practices on sexual and reproductive rights (importance of sexual and reproductive rights, people with whom they talk about sexuality, contraceptive methods, HIV / AIDS, sexually transmitted infections STIs, contraceptive methods).

Once the data were analyzed, the intervention phase was developed where an educational program on sexual and reproductive rights was developed for children and adolescents in the community of San Miguel de Pomachaca, Guamote-Chimborazo, based on the needs of the study group. The objective was to improve the

level of knowledge about the sexual and reproductive rights of children and adolescents in the San Miguel de Pomachaca, Guamote-Chimborazo, 2015. Whose goal was to raise to 90% the level of knowledge about sexual and reproductive rights with 8 pieces of training with a total duration of 1:45 minutes.

For the implementation of the educational program, the main problems on sexual and reproductive rights found in the community diagnosis were prioritized, using the active participatory methodology and techniques such as group workshops, educational videos, brainstorming and group meetings. Once the educational program had been implemented, a subsequent evaluation was conducted to measure the degree of knowledge acquired on sexual and reproductive rights.

Results

The following are the results obtained from the survey of 65 children and adolescents in the San Miguel de Pomachaca, Guamote-Chimborazo canton; as the first point of analysis of the survey, the socio-demographic characteristics of the study population are presented as shown in Table 1. Of the total of 65 participants, 42% were male, and

58% were female; 65% were between 10 and 14, and 35% were between 15 and 18. Most of the population in this community is relatively young, as evidenced by the study conducted by INEC in 2010, which confirms that the young population of Chimborazo is in the 0 to 14-year-old age range, with a considerable increase in both men and women.

For marital status, 88% were single, 5% were married, and 7% were in a free union, which is striking that at this age, they are already forming part of heads of households. The existing religious belief in the study population was 100% evangelical; these results contrast with the rest of the Puruha population present in the province of Chimborazo since most of their customs and religious beliefs are linked to the Catholic Church, beliefs that today are intermingled with practices of natural religiosity, where the link with nature becomes symbolic, data with the same trend presents Bermeo (2019), where he mentions the importance of the level of knowledge of sexual rights and reproductive rights of its population and it is conclusive that the same vary in terms of the right and the natural and perceived knowledge (p. 52).

Table 1

Socio-demographic factors

Variable	Indicator	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	27	42
	Female	38	58
	Total	65	100
Age	10-14 years	42	65
	15-18 years	23	35

	Total	65	100
Marital status	Single	57	88
	Married	3	5
	Divorced	0	0
	Widower	0	0
	Free union	5	7
	Total	65	100
Religious beliefs	Catholic	0	0
	Evangelical	65	100
	Jehovah's Witnesses	0	0
	Others	0	0
	Total	65	100

Table 2 shows the results of the absolute and relative values of the knowledge of sexual and reproductive rights of children and adolescents in the community of San Miguel de Pomachaca, Guamote-Chimborazo canton, where they were evaluated on their knowledge of sexual rights, reproductive rights, and sexual and reproductive health. As can be observed for the four aspects analyzed, the study population determined a tendency of incorrect knowledge of sexual rights, reproductive rights, sexual health, and reproductive health, which were 55.38%, 49.23%, 49.23% and 41.53%, respectively. This result shows the lack of information on this topic, and it should be noted that Plan International, in its analysis of the situation and response to the sexual and reproductive rights of children and adolescents in 2014 in the Guamote canton,

obtained results that are similar to the present research.

Bermeo (2019) determined that the real (correct) knowledge about sexual and reproductive rights shows low percentages of the students' self-perception about their knowledge; therefore, it could be said that being aware of the existence of sexual or reproductive rights does not ensure actual knowledge of them, being indispensable the execution of educational plans to this sector of the population.

Grajales and Cardona (2012) concluded that the population considers sex education to be important both in the family and at school, so parents were considered the most significant source of information, an important strategy to

prevent both unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections.

Table 2
Knowledge of sexual and reproductive rights

Variable	Indicator	Frequency	Percentage
Knowledge of the concept of sexual rights in children and adolescents.	Correct	18	27.69
	Incorrect	36	55.38
	No answer	5	7.69
	Do not know	6	9.23
	Total	65	
Knowledge of the concept of reproductive rights in children and adolescents.	Correct	16	24.61
	Incorrect	32	49.23
	No answer	7	10.76
	Do not know	10	15.38
	Total	65	
Knowledge of the concept of sexual health in children and adolescents.	Correct	21	32.30
	Incorrect	32	49.23
	No answer	7	10.76
	Do not know	5	7.69
	Total	65	
Knowledge of the concept of	Correct	17	26.15

reproductive health in children and adolescents.	Incorrect	27	41.53
	No answer	9	13.84
	Do not know	12	18.46
	Total	65	

Table 3 shows the absolute and relative values of sexual and reproductive rights practices in 65 children and adolescents in the community of San Miguel de Pomachaca, Guamote-Chimborazo canton, who were evaluated on aspects of the importance of sexual and reproductive rights, with whom they share knowledge of sexuality-related topics, knowledge of contraceptive methods, knowledge of HIV, AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases.

With respect to importance, 66.15% mentioned that sexual and reproductive rights are important, 10.76% stated that they are not important, and 23.07% did not know about the topic. When asked what people share topics related to sexuality,

27.69% said with their parents, 46.15% with teachers and 18.46% with friends. For aspects of knowledge of contraceptive methods, 70.76% mentioned that they know about these aspects and 29.23% mentioned that they do not.

For the evaluation of knowledge of HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, it is observed that 43.07% do have this knowledge and 43.07%. This trend is also observed for knowledge of sexually transmitted diseases, which reached 35.38% and 64.61% do not.

Table 3

Sexual and reproductive rights practices

Variable	Indicator	Frequency	Percentage
Importance of sexual and reproductive rights for children and adolescents.	Important are	43	66.15
	They are not important	7	10.76
	Do not know	15	23.07
	Total	65	100
People who share issues related to	Parents	18	27.69

sexuality with children and adolescents.	Teachers	30	46.15
	Friends	12	18.46
	None	5	7.69
	Total	65	100
Knowledge of contraceptive methods among children and adolescents	Yes	46	70.76
	No	19	29.23
	Total	65	100
Knowledge about HIV-AIDS in children and adolescents.	Yes	28	43.07
	No	37	56.92
	Total	65	100
Knowledge about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in children and adolescents.	Yes	23	35.38
	No	42	64.61
	Total	65	100

After the situational analysis, corrective actions were taken within the education process; a corrective action plan was developed for the population studied, as shown in Table 4, which presents the relative values and comparison of the results found, where an improvement in the responses of the population is observed, thanks to the educational plan achieved the proposed goal of contributing to the development of sexual and reproductive education.

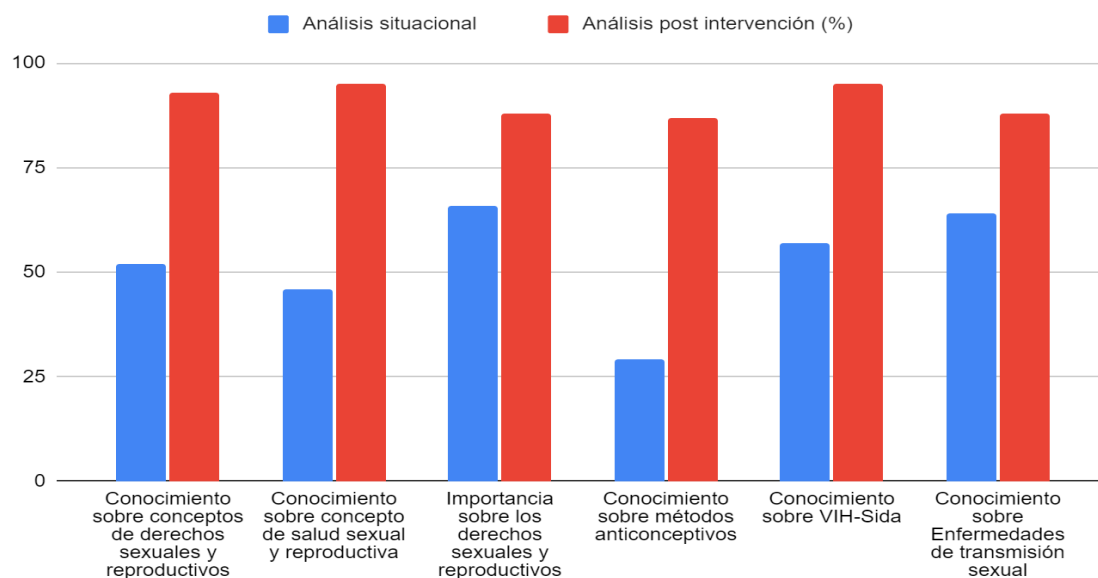
The average percentage before the educational program was 52% ignorance of the subject matter, and after the educational program was implemented and executed, the level of knowledge rose to 93%.

The educational program was positive because it was able to raise the level of knowledge about sexual and reproductive rights and thus contribute to the study group's comprehensive sexuality development.

Table 4

Post-implementation evaluation of the educational program

Variables	Situation analysis (%)	Post intervention analysis (%)
Knowledge of sexual and reproductive rights concepts.	52	93
Knowledge of the concept of sexual and reproductive health.	46	95
Importance of sexual and reproductive rights	66	88
Knowledge of contraceptive methods	29	87
Knowledge about HIV-AIDS	57	95
Knowledge of Sexually Transmitted Diseases	64	88

**Figure 1**

Situational analysis, post intervention análisis

Conclusions

The study was able to identify the socio-demographic characteristics of the study population where girls sponsored by Plan International are the majority in number, the most frequent age group is between 10 and 14 years old and where most of the people who participated in the research are single. In addition, the knowledge and practices on sexual and reproductive rights were measured in the study group, where the lack of knowledge on the subject was observed and analyzed.

An educational program was developed and designed based on the results of the diagnostic study, focusing on the primary deficiencies in the sexual and reproductive rights of this community.

The educational program on sexual and reproductive rights was carried out with children and adolescents sponsored by Plan International; the work was planned and monitored. The present process was evaluated, and it could be seen that before the intervention, the general percentage of knowledge on the subject was 52%; after the intervention of the educational program, the level of knowledge was raised to 93%, allowing to understand that the population that was part of the research has more fundamentals on the subject and thus contribute to the integral development of their sexuality.

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