



Every-Body[©]

A Health Relationships Programme

Analysis of Pilot Study

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Completed by Annabel Forsythe

With co-operation from: Racheal Ireton, Himali Nanayakkara, Sachini Dimuthumali and Rawindi Hewage (Ms. Rasika)

Introduction

“Sex” is not only the most searched term online in Sri Lanka, but for five consecutive years now Google trends show that Sri Lankans have searched it more than any other country in the world. Furthermore, the search frequency has been shown to increase during the school holiday periods, suggesting children and young people are thirsty for this information. Sri Lanka is a conservative country and sex is seldom openly discussed. While Sexual & Reproductive Health was introduced to the school curriculum in Sri Lanka in 1994, anecdotal evidence suggests many teachers shy away from teaching it, and instead send the students away to read about it after school. Sexual and reproductive knowledge therefore remains low amongst adolescents.

Despite the taboo around sex, Sri Lanka has followed the global trend of increased age of marriage, leading to a rise in pre-marital sex. The lack of accurate knowledge combined with a trend towards earlier sexual debut, puts young people at risk of the possible negative consequences of sex – unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, unhealthy or exploitative relationships and sexual assault. It is therefore becoming increasingly important that Sri Lankan adolescents are provided with the facts that they need to keep themselves reproductively healthy and safe.

With this in mind, in June 2017 the Tea Project has created a brand new Healthy Relationships training programme entitled Every-Body©; it’s aim being to tackle this topic in a socially and culturally acceptable manner within Sri Lankan secondary schools.



Method

Every-Body© was designed as a one-day training session to fit into a standard Sri-Lankan school day. To date, three variations of the programme have been created; one designed for an all-girls' group, one for all-boys' and one for a mixed group.

All versions of the programme commence with a three hour session entitled "My Relationships" aimed at learning about healthy and unhealthy partner relationships. This includes interactive group activities such as a "Traffic Light Game" icebreaker, the creation of a Healthy/Unhealthy Relationships poster and a role-play activity.



The "All Girls" programme then has a one hour session entitled "My Body" which consists of a PowerPoint presentation on female puberty followed by a group activity where the girls create floor collages of phases of the menstrual cycle.



The “All Boys” programme also has a one hour session entitled “My Body” which consists of a PowerPoint presentation on male puberty followed by a group activity about the emotions of adolescence “Emotional Pairs” and a brainstorm on behaviour and respect for girls and women.

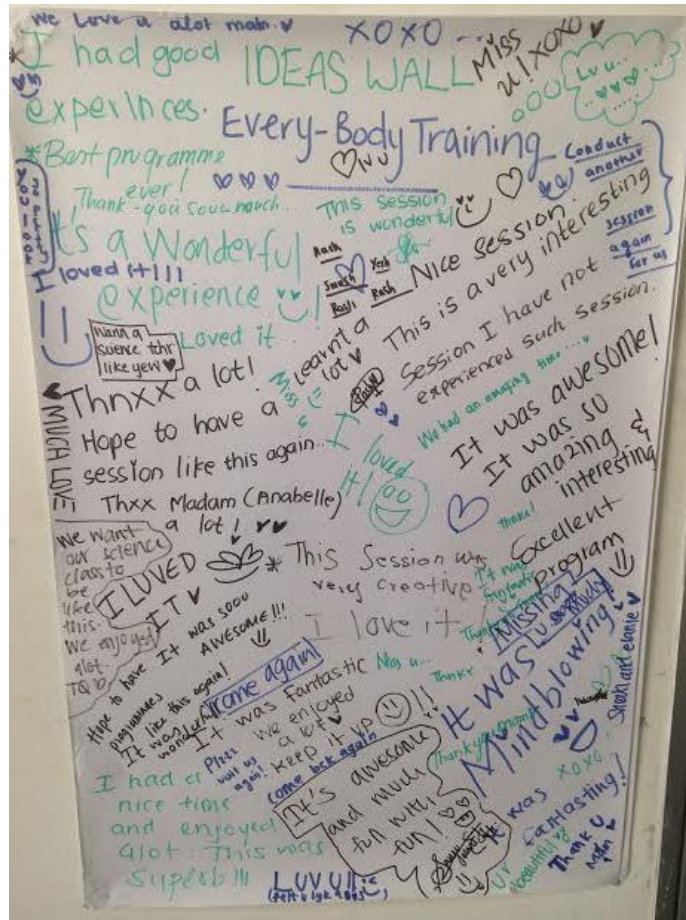
The “Mixed” programme has a one hour session entitled “Same Same but Different” which aims to challenge gender stereotypes through use of a game “Who am I?” and a quiz.

All of the programmes include an anonymous “Question Box” for students to post their questions into, with time allocated to answer the questions.



The Every-Body© pilot programme was run over six full-day sessions at a progressive English-medium International School serving the North-Western province of Sri Lanka.

Data about the acceptability of the programme were gathered in the form of a feedback form completed by each student at the end of their session and through an “Ideas Wall” upon which they were encouraged to write their comments and suggestions. Information was also collected from the anonymous questions the students posted into the “Question Box”.



Results

Between 28/06/2017 and 06/07/2017, six full-day programmes were completed for Year 9 and 10 students (15-16 year olds).

Four “All Girls”, one “mixed girls and boys” and one “All Boys” session took place during the course of the pilot. 114 students in total participated (82 girls and 32 boys).

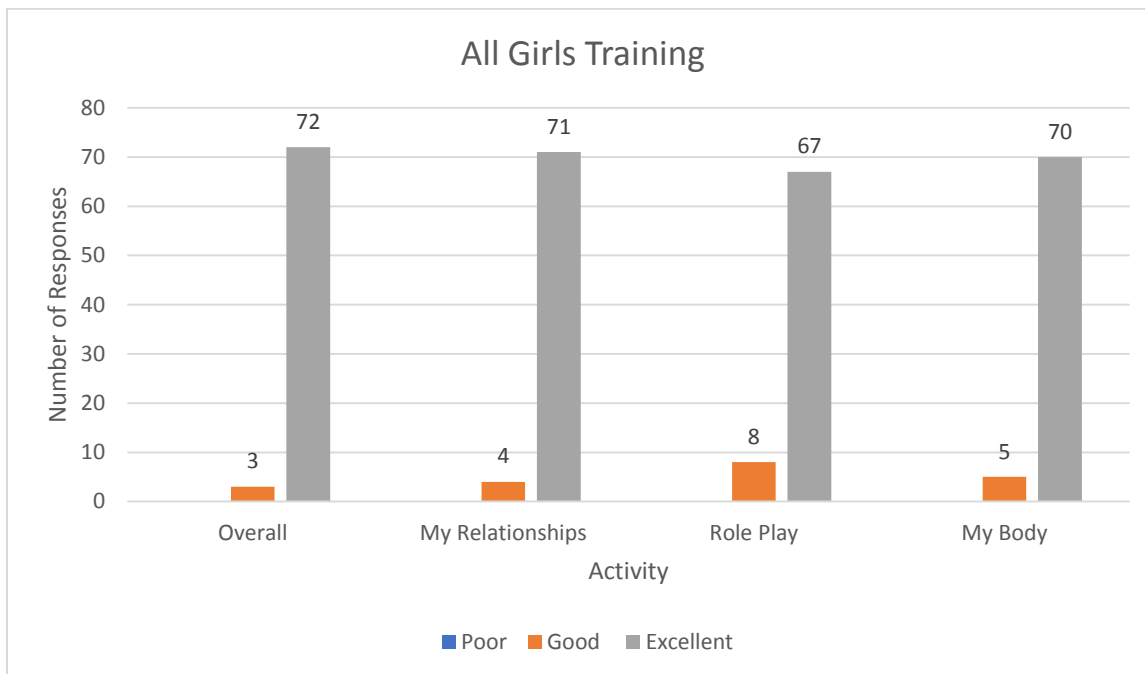
Training Session	Number of Girls Trained	Number of Boys Trained	Total Trained
All Girls	77	0	77
All Boys	0	17	17
Mixed	5	15	20
Total Trained	82	32	114

Out of 114 students, 111 completed a feedback form. The remaining 3 students were removed from the programme before completion as they were required to participate in other school activities.

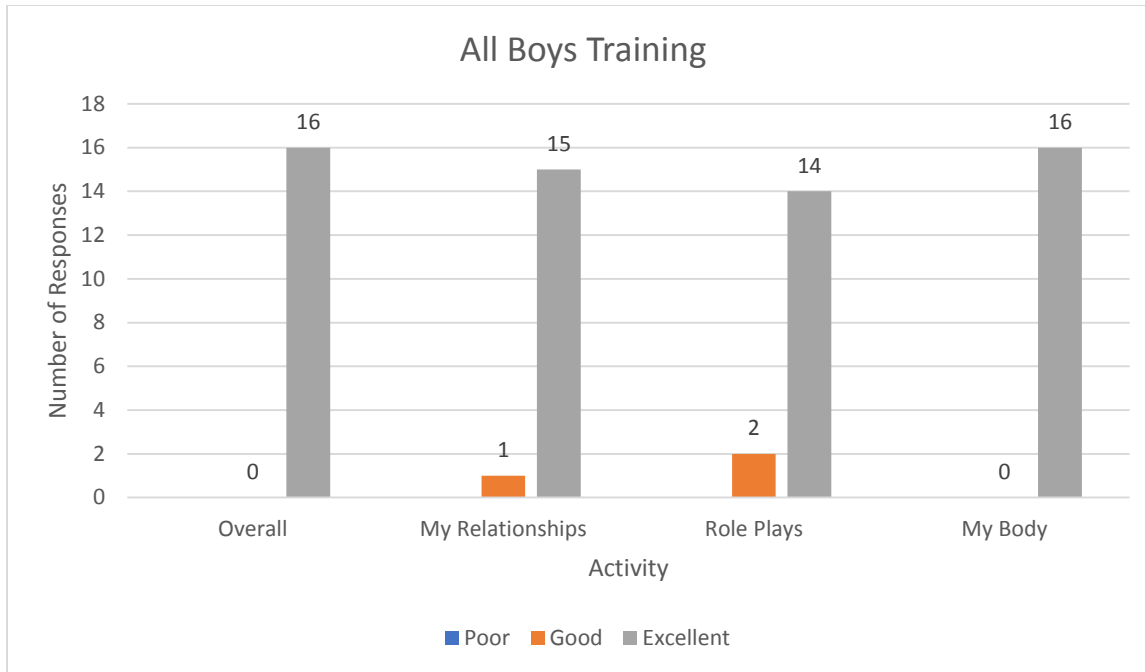
In the feedback form, the students were asked to rate aspects of the programme as *poor*, *good* or *excellent*. They were asked to rate the following:

1. The training overall
2. The **My Relationships** session
3. The Unhealthy Relationships **Role Play**
4. The **My Body** session

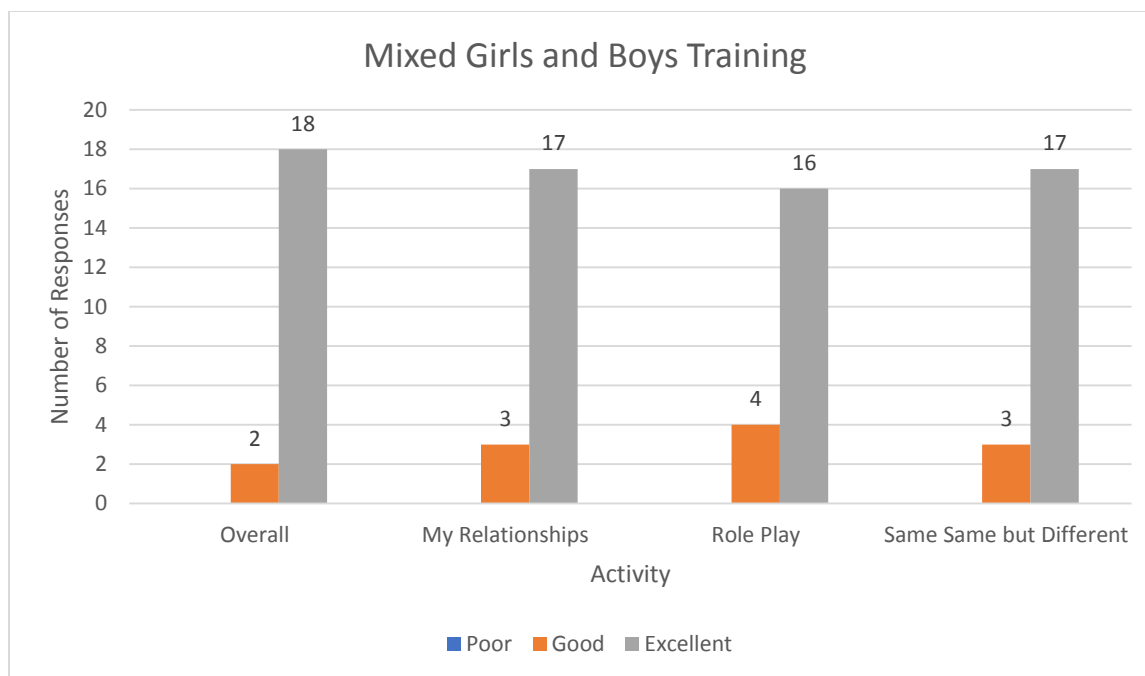
The responses from the feedback forms are illustrated in the charts below.



In the All Girls Programme, 72 out of 77 (94%) of girls rated the programme as *Excellent* overall. All individual aspects of the programme appeared to be popular, with the **My Relationships** session scoring marginally higher than the **Role Play** and **My Body** sessions. No aspects of the programme were rated as *Poor* by any of the participants.



In the All Boys programme, 16 out of 16 (100%) rated the programme as *Excellent* overall. The **My Body** session was marginally more popular than the other sessions, with 16 out of 16 (100%) scoring it as *Excellent*. No aspects of the programme were rated as *Poor* by any of the participants.



In the Mixed programme, 18 out of 20 (90%) of students rated the programme as *Excellent* overall. The most popular sessions were the **My Relationships** and the **Same Same but Different** sessions, with the **Role Play** being rated slightly less favourably. No aspects of the programme were rated as *Poor* by any of the participants.

The students were then asked the following open questions:

1. What did you enjoy most about the training?
2. What did you learn most from the training?

The responses are tabulated below according to the version of the programme the students attended (i.e. All girls, All Boys or Mixed):

All Girls Training: What did you enjoy most?	Number of responses
Everything	24
Traffic Light Game	7
My Relationships Posters	27
My Body Presentation	8
Menstrual Collages	9
Role Play	40
Question Time	3
The Facilitators	5

What did you learn the most about?	
Everything	3
About healthy relationships	58
About puberty and my body	38
How to face challenges & manage emotions	9
I had my questions answered	3

In the All Girls programme, the most enjoyable activity was the **Role Play**, followed by the **My Relationships** posters. The girls said that they learnt most about **healthy relationships** followed by **Puberty and their bodies**.

All Boys Training: What did you enjoy most?	Number of responses
Everything	1
My Relationships Posters	3
My Body Presentation	2
Emotional Pairs Game	12
Role Play	2
Question Time	1
What did you learn the most about?	
About healthy relationships	15
About puberty and my body	5
About respecting women and girls	1
About teamwork	2

In the All Boys programme, the most enjoyable activity was the **Emotional Pairs game**. The boys learnt most about **healthy relationships**, followed by **puberty and their bodies**.

Mixed Training: What did you enjoy most?	Number of responses
Everything	6
Traffic Light Game	1
My Relationships Posters	2
What do I do Game	5
Role Play	8
Question Time	7
What did you learn the most about?	
About healthy relationships	16
How to face challenges and manage emotions	2
I had my questions answered	2
About gender and the opposite sex	2

In the Mixed programme, the most enjoyable activity was the **Role Play**, closely followed by **Question Time** and then the **What do I Do? Game**. The boys and girls said they learnt most about **healthy relationships**.

Finally, the students were asked for any comments on the training and any suggestions for improvement. The responses (minus duplications) are summarized the boxes below:

Comments made about the training

My doubts were solved
Lots of fun, lots of laughs
Best programme ever
I am a person who is a bit shy but today I was able to be brave
Time passed and I couldn't even feel it!
I enjoyed each and every activity today, the programme was superb
It was awesome
The doctor was as close as our mother
OMG we learnt a lot!
I learnt how important it is to be a girl and I'm proud to be female
I learnt a heap of things from the programme
The best programme I have ever participated in
It's wonderful!
May this programme continue for long solving the issues of women
Well planned and conducted
I haven't experienced such a programme in my life
Usually I feel sleepy but in this session I didn't feel sleepy
Wish every science period was like this!
You answered my questions

Suggestions for improvements made by participants

Include songs, videos and a chance to dance
Have it again!
More games, drama and plays
Do one for the boys
Do one for the teachers
Do it for a longer time period – at least 2 days
Do it in every grade
Do it in a bigger space
I guess it's perfect already!
Have it on a weekend
Include more groupwork
Reduce the amount of breaks
Make it more fun – it was fun already but some things could have been even better

Finally, to help shape future training, the questions posted in the Question Box were counted, analysed and divided into general themes, as documented below:

Training Session	Number of questions	Average number of questions per student
Day 1 (all girls)	34	1.7
Day 2 (all girls)	24	1.1
Day 3 (all girls)	14	0.9
Day 4 (all girls)	28	1.6
Day 5 (mixed)	45	2.3
Day 6 (all boys)	35	2.1
All sessions combined	180	1.6

Theme	Examples	Number of questions
Healthy and unhealthy relationships ✓ (Relationships and age)	<i>How can we maintain a healthy relationship? What to do if your partner has an affair? Is it ok to make friends and relationships online? Is it ok to have a relationship at this age? Is it ok to have a relationship with an older partner?</i>	57 (15)
Emotions	<i>Why do I get angry for no reason? How to understand the difference between love and lust? How to be happy and enjoy life?</i>	35
Understanding and negotiating with the opposite sex	<i>How do I deal with boys/girls who like me? How can I tell a person I like/love them? Why does he/she not love me? What to do? How to manage crushes?</i>	28
Sexual feelings, sexuality and homosexuality	<i>Why do we get feelings when we are touched by a boy? Why do some girls get feelings towards girls and boys get feelings towards boys?</i>	5
Reproductive Health and Puberty	<i>Why do boys not get periods? Is it bad if I don't get a period each month? Why can some women not have babies?</i>	13
Personal safety	<i>What to do if a teacher is trying to have an affair with a student? How to deal with a friend who is suicidal?</i>	5
Comments / Questions about training and/or the facilitators	<i>We need more training like this! How did you become a doctor?</i>	29

Opinions of Society, teachers and parents	<i>How does religion affect relationships? If I have a relationship will it give me a bad name? Why do people think bad things when we talk to a boy? Can you do this programme for teachers please?</i>	8
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On average, students asked 1.6 questions each. Being in a mixed class did not stop students from asking questions; in fact the mixed class asked the greatest number of questions on average per student. The majority of the questions were about healthy and unhealthy relationships, including relationships at their age, followed by questions about emotions. 5 questions about sexuality and homosexuality were asked, despite this not being covered in the programme due to cultural sensitivities. Two questions concerned inappropriate behaviour by a teacher. The school management was informed of these questions and advised to take appropriate action in response to these concerns.

Conclusion

Every-Body© was designed to be a judicious and culturally acceptable approach to teaching students in Sri Lanka about the “taboo” subject of relationships and sexual and reproductive health. The results of this pilot study suggest that Sri Lankan students welcome and value open discussion on the personal issues that they face during their adolescent years. The feedback was very positive and asked for the training to be expanded to cover more year groups, both boys and girls and even teachers. All aspects of the training programme scored highly and the majority of the suggestions were for even more games and activities, more time and more space. The nature of the questions, which included questions on sexuality and social media, could advocate refining the programme to represent the current issues and needs of Sri Lankan students. However, it must be noted that the school chosen for the pilot study was an international private English-medium school and the needs of government schools (and what the teachers and parents find acceptable) may be very different indeed.

Key Recommendations

- ✓ Tea Project staff and volunteers to disseminate Every-Body© programme to other willing schools throughout Sri Lanka.
- ✓ Programme to be translated into Sinhala and Tamil for use in non-English medium schools.
- ✓ Consider running the training for teachers so that they have a better understanding of the aim of the programme. Some may wish to receive further training to run the programme independently.
- ✓ Consider expanding the training by adding modules to the basic package to cover a wider range of subjects.
- ✓ Consider running the programme for longer (i.e. over a weekend or over two school days).

