

VISION IN ACTION CAMEROON

**TRAINING OF COMMUNITY MOBILIZERS ON CSE, MHM IN
GRASSROOT COMMUNITIES IN THE SOUTHWEST REGION
OF CAMEROON**

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ABOUT VIAC

VIAC is a youth-led organization working in communities across Cameroon to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights. We support and enable AGYW in programs and influence change in the areas of Research (Evidence Generation), Advocacy (community mobilization), information & communication from a Human Rights approach. Our approach is geared towards gender transformative and feminist theories all based on human rights approaches. We started in 2007 as a youth club and later registered in 2014 with the corporate affairs as an association.



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I. Value Clarification and Attitude Transformation (VCAT) TRAINING GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY MOBILIZERS

A VCAT session in summary is a process that seeks to transform values and attitudes of individuals by making them understand the point of view of others.

a) VCAT on Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Punish, leave or encouraged (the Judge Game)

This is a role play game that gives you the ability to decide what you believe should be punished left as it is or encouraged

You are a very principled chief who believes in your values. A number of cases that have or are happening in the community have been brought to you. You have to decide if a case should be punished, left as it is or encouraged.

1. A woman has been having sex with men even though she is not married
2. A primary school teacher is teaching her class six students sex education
3. A father is teaching a daughter about menstruation even though they are just 9 years old
4. The community nurse has refused to offer any method of contraceptives to a 16-year-old girl asking for it.
5. A woman beat up her 14-year-old girl child without mercy because she found a condom in her bag
6. A man is having sex with several women when he is not yet married
7. A woman raped her husband
8. The community pastor wants to talk about contraceptives to the youth group
9. The school has completely refused to teach comprehensive sexuality education to form one student
10. A woman has been selling condoms to everyone including young people below 15
11. A woman was raped by her husband

12. A woman with five children just got pregnant again and wants to end the pregnancy

13. A woman at the age of 35 has refused to get married

b) VCAT on contraceptives

Statements and action = reactions (The reaction game)

HOW the game is played

Participants will volunteer to be chief each chief will pass judgment on three statements and explain why they make that decision

The purpose of the game is to understand the mindset of the individuals and to change their values through facts of the statements

Make a reaction based on the action or statement you have just witnessed

- Am a 13-year-old but I want to have family planning
- I want my and I husband to use a condom during sex
- I don't like having sex with condom
- I take my three months family planning so I can have sex with a person I like without a condom
- I don't sell to people under 17 years
- I don't have sex without a condom
- Every time I have unprotected sex, I take Postinol
- I calculate and follow my menstrual cycle carefully so I don't get pregnant
- I would advise all young girls to have a means of contraceptives
- I use Postinor to end my pregnancy
- I don't like all this family planning because they make me fat.
- Contraceptives can make you to never have children
- Using contraceptives make someone promiscuous

The essence of the game is to understand the reaction of people when it comes to practices on contraceptives both right and wrong. We will end our session with this story.

III. VCAT ON SAFE ABORTION

Mia was the eldest child in her family. She was clever and hard-working. Even though she worked hard at home to help her mother, school was her priority. She was always top of the class and was the pride and joy of her family and the village. Mia won a scholarship to go to university. It was her first time living in a big city and she found it hard to make new friends. But little by little, things changed and she adapted to her new environment. Mia continued to study hard and always came top of her class. Her teachers were very proud of her and took a great interest in her future. They encouraged her to pursue her professional ambitions. After graduating, Mia was hired by a company and was able to send money back to her parents to pay for her younger siblings' school fees. She became the financial breadwinner for her whole family. It was then that she met Richard, a work colleague, and fell in love. At first Richard was sweet and gentle, but gradually he began to change. He became distant and unkind to Mia. Mia soon discovered that Richard had another girlfriend. When she found out, she told Richard that their relationship was over. Richard became angry and forced her to have sex with him. He knew she wasn't using any contraception. As he pushed her out the door, he said "I know that when you get pregnant, you'll come back to me". Three months later, after feeling ill for some time, Mia went to hospital. When she came back for her test results, she was shocked to discover that she was in fact pregnant. Mia had always had an irregular menstrual cycle and had never learnt to recognize the symptoms of pregnancy. She decided that under no circumstances would she go back to Richard. When she returned to the hospital to ask about a possible abortion, the staff looked at her with disgust and refused to answer her questions. Mia went to another hospital to ask for an abortion, but was also turned away. Mia was very scared and too ashamed to tell anyone in her family about the rape and pregnancy. She didn't think anyone would help her and felt desperate. She tried to drink a poisonous potion made from household products which, she had heard, would end her pregnancy. She tried to insert sticks into the cervix of her uterus. She became seriously ill and developed a very painful infection, but she was still pregnant. Finally, after trying everything, Mia committed suicide

1. What is the cause of Mia's death?
2. Who are those responsible for Mia's death?
3. What should have been done to prevent Mia's death?

OVERVIEW OF COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION, MENSTRUAL HEALTH AND CONTRACEPTIVES

Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) is a curriculum-based approach designed to provide individuals with age-appropriate information on human development, relationships, sexual health, and reproductive rights. The primary goal of CSE is to equip individuals with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary to make informed decisions regarding their sexual and reproductive health. Within the realm of CSE, a significant emphasis is placed on promoting menstrual health and contraceptive knowledge and access. Menstrual health encompasses the physical, emotional, and social well-being related to menstruation, including understanding menstrual cycles, managing hygiene, addressing disorders, and promoting equity and dignity. On the other hand, contraceptives are methods or devices utilized to prevent pregnancy by inhibiting ovulation, fertilization, or implantation, such as condoms, birth control pills, IUDs, implants, and sterilization procedures. Through CSE, individuals receive education on menstrual health, contraceptive methods, their effectiveness, usage instructions, and potential side effects, empowering them to make informed choices about family planning, preventing unintended pregnancies, and safeguarding against sexually transmitted infections. Moreover, CSE acknowledges the intersectionality of menstrual health and contraceptives within broader sexual and reproductive health issues, emphasizing the impact of these factors on overall sexual well-being. By promoting empowerment, addressing stigma, and advocating for health equity, CSE fosters an environment conducive to open discussions, informed decision-making, and

inclusive sexual and reproductive health care approaches. Through the integration of menstrual health education and contraceptive information into CSE programs, individuals can cultivate a comprehensive understanding of their sexual and reproductive health, enabling them to make informed choices and take charge of their well-being effectively.

Reflection

1. Participants should reflect on the different components of CSE and share their ideas
2. Why is necessary to have aspects of CSE in community intervention programs

WHY CSE IS IMPORTANT

Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) is important for several reasons:

1. **Promotes Health and Well-being:** CSE equips individuals with accurate information on sexual and reproductive health, helping them make informed decisions, reduce risky behaviors, and maintain their overall well-being.
2. **Empowers Individuals:** CSE empowers individuals to understand and assert their rights, make choices about their bodies, relationships, and sexuality, and advocate for their health needs.
3. **Prevents Health Risks:** By providing information on contraception, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and safe sex practices, CSE helps prevent unintended pregnancies, STIs, and other health risks.
4. **Promotes Gender Equality:** CSE addresses gender norms, stereotypes, and inequalities, promoting respect, consent, and equality in relationships and sexual interactions.
5. **Supports Mental Health:** CSE addresses mental health aspects of sexuality, such as body image, self-esteem, and healthy relationships, promoting mental well-being and resilience.
6. **Fosters Inclusivity:** CSE is inclusive of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and experiences, creating a safe and supportive environment for all individuals.
7. **Reduces Stigma and Discrimination:** By challenging stigma, discrimination, and taboos around sexuality and reproductive health, CSE promotes acceptance, understanding, and respect for diversity.

8. **Encourages Communication:** CSE encourages open communication about sexuality, relationships, and consent, fostering healthy communication skills and supportive social networks.
9. **Supports Rights-Based Approach:** CSE is grounded in human rights principles, emphasizing the right to information, education, health, and bodily autonomy for all individuals.
10. **Contributes to Sustainable Development:** CSE is linked to broader development goals such as gender equality, health equity, and social justice, contributing to sustainable and inclusive societies.

Gender Transformation Approach session to CSE

Activity: GUIDE FOR THE GAME

Every individual makes up a community thus every action and reaction of a community stems from the decision taking by individuals. The aim of the game is to build a better and stronger community based on your choices of what you agree that makes up a better community.

Instruction:

Three cards will be distributed to each of you and you have 10 seconds to take a look at your cards;

If you agreed: if you agree with all three of your cards then you may drop them on the table

If you do not agree: with any of your cards fill free to go to the board and change your card to the one that suits you.

Method For Scoring Points

Explain how your three chosen cards leads to community development

If your answer goes with the facts gathered on community development based on gender transformation then you win but if it goes against it then you have learned.

Note that some communities can be strong while others can be stronger or strongest

Your choice of cards and its justification determine which category you fall on.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

COMMUNITY MOBILIZER

A community mobilizer is someone who works to bring people together within a community to address common issues, solve problems, and achieve shared goals. They help organize and empower community members to take action and create positive change within their local area.

QUALITIES OF A COMMUNITY MOBILIZER

The qualities of a community mobilizer encompass a diverse set of skills and attributes crucial for effective community engagement. A community mobilizer should possess strong communication skills to interact with community members adeptly, empathy to connect with individuals from various backgrounds, and leadership abilities to inspire collective action. Additionally, organizational skills are essential for planning and coordinating community activities, while problem-solving skills enable the mobilizer to address challenges within the community. Adaptability is key in navigating dynamic environments, and collaboration skills are vital for building partnerships with stakeholders. Furthermore, a community mobilizer should exhibit passion and unwavering commitment to making a positive impact in the community, embodying a dedication that drives sustainable change and fosters community development

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Case scenarios: (Communication Skill, Problem-Solving Skills, Collaboration Skill)

Scenario 1: A community mobilizer is tasked with organizing a health awareness campaign in a rural village. Despite initial resistance from community members due to language barriers and cultural differences, the mobilizer effectively communicates the importance of the campaign using local dialects and engaging visuals. Through clear and empathetic communication, the mobilizer gains the trust of the community and successfully mobilizes them to participate in the campaign.

Scenario 2: In an urban neighborhood facing a sanitation crisis, a community mobilizer encounters logistical challenges in securing resources for a cleanup drive. Drawing on their problem-solving skills, the mobilizer collaborates with local businesses and government agencies to source necessary materials and volunteers. By creatively addressing obstacles and finding practical solutions, the mobilizer leads a successful cleanup initiative that improves the neighborhood's hygiene conditions.

Scenario 3: A community mobilizer called Alex, lacks strong communication skills and struggles to effectively convey information to community members. Alex often misunderstands the needs and concerns of the community, leading to frustration and disengagement. Additionally, Alex shows little empathy towards individuals from diverse backgrounds, making it challenging to build trust and meaningful connections within the community. Due to these shortcomings, Alex faces difficulties in inspiring collective action and fostering collaboration among community members and stakeholders.

Scenario 4: A community mobilizer is working on a project to establish a community garden in a suburban area. Recognizing the need for diverse expertise, the mobilizer proactively reaches out to local schools, environmental organizations, and residents to form a collaborative partnership. Through effective collaboration and relationship-building, the mobilizer leverages the collective resources and knowledge of stakeholders to design, implement, and sustain the community garden, fostering a sense of ownership and pride among participants.

Exercise

State which is a better mobilizer and why

CAPACITIES AND SKILLS FOR COMMUNITY MOBILIZERS

Community mobilizers require a combination of capacities and skills to effectively engage with communities and drive positive change. Some key capacities and skills for community mobilizers include:

1. **Communication:** Ability to effectively communicate ideas, goals, and information to diverse audiences within the community.
2. **Networking:** Building and maintaining relationships with community members, organizations, and stakeholders to facilitate collaboration and partnerships.
3. **Facilitation:** Skill in guiding group discussions, meetings, and activities to ensure productive and inclusive participation.
4. **Community Assessment:** Capacity to assess community needs and resources to develop targeted strategies for mobilization.
5. **Advocacy:** Ability to advocate for community interests, raise awareness about issues, and influence decision-makers.
6. **Resource Mobilization:** Skills in identifying and accessing resources and support to implement community initiatives.
7. **Cultural Competence:** Understanding and respecting cultural diversity within the community to ensure inclusive and culturally sensitive mobilization efforts.
8. **Empowerment:** Fostering empowerment among community members by building their skills, knowledge, and confidence to participate in collective action.

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Exercise

1. Short exercises on each of the above

. **Communication Exercise:** Communication game by all participants to be able to identify bad and communication skills.

Networking Activity:

Give participants time to demonstrate how to network. participants have the opportunity to connect with various community members, organizations, and stakeholders...

Advocacy exercise:

Divide participants into groups and assign each group a community issue to advocate for. Participants must develop an advocacy campaign plan, including strategies to raise awareness, engage stakeholders, and influence decision-makers to address the issue effectively.

Cultural Competence:

ask for participants to share with the team cultures in their different communities. What is acceptable and what is not acceptable in their various communities.

Empowerment Activity:

Offer training sessions on leadership, communication, and advocacy to empower individuals to take active roles in community initiatives.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMUNITY MOBILIZER

The roles and responsibilities of a community mobilizer typically include:

1. **Engagement:** Actively engage with community members to build relationships, trust, and a sense of belonging within the community.
2. **Needs Assessment:** Identify and assess the needs, priorities, and assets of the community through consultations and research.
3. **Planning:** Develop strategic plans and initiatives in collaboration with community members to address identified needs and achieve common goals.
4. **Mobilization:** Mobilize community members to participate in activities, programs, and projects that promote community well-being and development.

5. **Advocacy:** Advocate for the interests and rights of the community to relevant stakeholders, decision-makers, and authorities.
6. **Capacity Building:** Facilitate training, workshops, and skill-building activities to empower community members and enhance their capabilities.
7. **Networking:** Build partnerships and collaborate with local organizations, agencies, and institutions to leverage resources and support for community initiatives.
8. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Monitor the progress and impact of mobilization efforts, evaluate outcomes, and adjust strategies as needed.
9. **Documentation:** Maintain accurate records, reports, and documentation of mobilization activities, achievements, and challenges

Exercise

1. Break them out into groups let them come up with the roles and responsibilities of community mobilizers

HOW COMMUNITY MOBILIZERS CAN IDENTIFY AND ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

Community mobilizers can identify and engage the community through various strategies, including:

1. **Community Mapping:** Conducting a thorough assessment of the community to identify key stakeholders, groups, and leaders or by identifying influential individuals, community organizations, and informal groups, mobilizers can establish connections, build relationships, and leverage existing resources to support community initiatives. Community mapping also helps mobilizers recognize existing challenges, gaps in services, and areas for improvement within the community. By analyzing the information gathered during the mapping process, mobilizers can tailor their approaches, prioritize interventions, and address community needs effectively. Additionally, community mapping fosters community empowerment by involving residents in the assessment process, promoting ownership of initiatives, and fostering a sense of collective responsibility for community development.

2. **Door-to-Door Visits:** Engaging in face-to-face interactions with community members to introduce themselves, listen to their concerns, and build trust.
3. **Community Meetings:** Organizing regular community meetings or forums to discuss issues, gather feedback, and foster dialogue among residents. Or organize activities to bring residents together, raise awareness, and encourage participation.
4. **Utilizing Existing Networks:** Leveraging existing community groups, organizations, and networks to reach a wider audience and collaborate on mobilization efforts.
5. **Social media and Online Platforms:** Using social media channels, websites, and online platforms to share information, engage with community members, and promote events.
6. **Door-to-Door Campaigns:** Conducting targeted campaigns or outreach activities door-to-door to raise awareness about specific issues or initiatives.
7. **Collaboration with Local Leaders:** Building relationships with local leaders, influencers, and organizations to gain support and credibility within the community.
8. **Feedback Mechanisms:** Establishing feedback mechanisms such as suggestion boxes, hotlines, or online surveys to gather input and insights from community members.

Exercise

1. The mapping exercise with them
 - Firstly, **identify the objective** of the mapping (what information you aim to gather and how the information will be used to support the community)
 - **Identify the key stakeholders** (key individuals, different groups and leaders)
 - **Gather Data:** Collect relevant data on demographics, resources, infrastructure, services, and community assets. This data can come from various sources such as government reports, surveys, community organizations, or local knowledge.
 - **Select Mapping Tools:** Choose a suitable mapping tool for visualizing the data. E.g Google Map
 - **Prepare the Data:** Organize and prepare the data for mapping. Ensure that the data is in a format that can be easily plotted on a map.

- **Create the Map:** Use the selected mapping tool to create the map visualizations. Customize the map to highlight different components of the community based on the data collected.
 - **Analyze and Interpret:** Analyze the mapped data to identify patterns, trends, and areas of interest within the community. Interpret the findings to draw meaningful insights.
 - **Share and Engage:** Share the mapped data with community members, stakeholders, or decision-makers. Encourage engagement and discussion around the insights gained from the community mapping exercise.
2. Identify the best strategy you think suits your community

COMMUNICATION WITHIN COMMUNITIES

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN COMMUNITY MOBILIZERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Question: Why it is important to engage young people

Effective communication between community mobilizers and adolescents is crucial for engaging young people in community initiatives and addressing their needs. Some key considerations for fostering communication between community mobilizers and adolescents include:

1. **Active Listening:** Take the time to listen to adolescents' perspectives, concerns, and ideas without judgment. Show empathy and respect for their opinions.
2. **Use of Youth-Friendly Language:** Tailor communication to be age-appropriate, clear, and engaging for adolescents. Avoid complex language.
3. **Interactive and Participatory Approaches:** Engage adolescents in interactive activities, like focus group discussions, VCAT sessions and participatory exercises to encourage their active involvement and contribution.

4. **Respect for Diversity:** Acknowledge and respect the diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and identities among adolescents. Create a safe and inclusive space for communication.
5. **Empowerment:** Empower adolescents to voice their opinions, take on leadership roles, and participate in decision-making processes related to community initiatives.
6. **Digital Communication:** Utilize digital communication channels such as social media, messaging apps, and online platforms that are popular among adolescents for outreach and engagement. You can create like a friendly WhatsApp group
7. **Peer-to-Peer Communication:** Encourage peer-to-peer communication and collaboration among adolescents to foster a sense of community and shared responsibility.
8. **Feedback Mechanisms:** Establish feedback mechanisms that allow adolescents to provide input, suggestions, and feedback on community mobilization efforts.
9. **Building Trust:** Build trust and credibility with adolescents through transparency, consistency, and follow-through on commitments.
10. **Capacity Building:** Provide opportunities for adolescents to build their skills, knowledge, and confidence through training, mentorship, and educational activities.

Exercise

1. Best Strategies suitable for their communities
2. What are some of the challenges engaging young people?

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN COMMUNITY MOBILIZERS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

Question: Why it is important to engage community leader?

Effective communication between community mobilizers and community leaders is essential for successful community mobilization efforts. Some key aspects of communication between community mobilizers and community leaders include:

1. **Establishing Trust:** Building trust is crucial for effective communication. Community mobilizers should establish credibility and rapport with community leaders through honesty, transparency, and reliability.
2. **Clear and Concise Communication:** Communicate goals, objectives, and strategies clearly and concisely to community leaders to ensure a shared understanding of the mobilization efforts.
3. **Active Listening:** Listen attentively to the perspectives, concerns, and feedback of community leaders. Acknowledge their insights and demonstrate respect for their experiences and knowledge.
4. **Mutual Respect:** Show respect for the roles, expertise, and contributions of community leaders. Value their input and involve them in decision-making processes.
5. **Regular Updates:** Provide regular updates on mobilization activities, progress, challenges, and outcomes to keep community leaders informed and engaged.
6. **Collaborative Approach:** Foster a collaborative approach by seeking input, feedback, and suggestions from community leaders. Encourage dialogue and open communication channels.
7. **Alignment of Goals:** Ensure that the goals and objectives of the mobilization efforts align with the priorities and interests of the community leaders. Highlight shared values and common objectives.
8. **Networking and Partnerships:** Leverage the networks and connections of community leaders to expand outreach and build partnerships for community initiatives.
9. **Recognition and Appreciation:** Recognize and appreciate the contributions and support of community leaders in mobilization efforts. Show gratitude for their commitment and involvement.

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Exercise

1. Best Strategies suitable for their communities
2. What are some of the challenges engaging community leaders?

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN COMMUNITY MOBILIZERS AND PARENTS

Question: Why it is important to engage parents

Effective communication between community mobilizers and parents is essential for engaging families in community initiatives and addressing the needs of children and youth. Some key considerations for fostering communication between community mobilizers and parents include:

1. **Building Trust:** Establishing trust is crucial. Community mobilizers should demonstrate credibility, reliability, and transparency in their interactions with parents.
2. **Respectful and Empathetic Communication:** Communicate with parents in a respectful and empathetic manner, acknowledging their perspectives, concerns, and priorities.
3. **Clear and Timely Information:** Provide clear and timely information about community initiatives, programs, and activities to keep parents informed and involved.
4. **Two-Way Communication:** Encourage open dialogue and two-way communication with parents, allowing them to ask questions, share feedback, and contribute their insights.
5. **Cultural Sensitivity:** Be mindful of cultural norms, values, and practices when communicating with parents from diverse backgrounds. Respect cultural differences and adapt communication strategies accordingly.
6. **Education and Awareness:** Provide educational resources, workshops, and training sessions for parents to increase their awareness and understanding of community issues and initiatives.
7. **Supportive Environment:** Create a supportive and welcoming environment for parents to participate in community activities, express their concerns, and collaborate with other families.
8. **Collaboration and Partnership:** Collaborate with parents as partners in community mobilization efforts, valuing their expertise, experiences, and insights in shaping programs and services.
9. **Feedback Mechanisms:** Establish feedback mechanisms that allow parents to provide input, suggestions, and feedback on community initiatives, ensuring their voices are heard and valued.

Exercise

1. Best Strategies suitable for their communities
2. What are some of the challenges engaging parents?



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