

# Covid-19

When the whole world went online, we accepted a new challenge. Since the beginning of quarantine, we have been working online to help teens stay calm during the coronavirus pandemic.

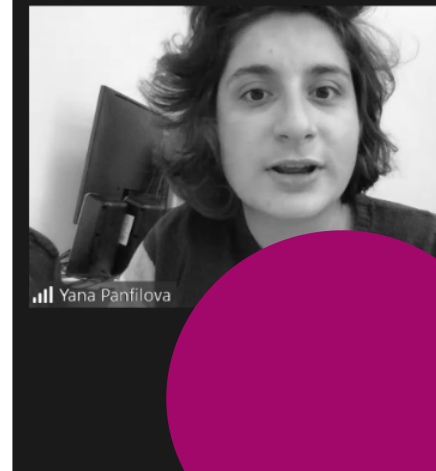
Just in 2 months we held:

14 live broadcasts and reached 2,364,844 adolescents;

126 online trainings and trained 1,937 adolescents and professionals;

225 online consultations and helped other guys feel better;

and also wrote more than 30 articles for 103,160 readers of our site.



Digitalisation of SRHR/HIV Interventions for Young People:

Challenges, Barriers & Success Stories

## Webinar report

This webinar was held on 25<sup>th</sup> of November, organised by the Share-Net Netherlands Community of Practice on 'SRHR and HIV Integration' which consists of Dance4Life, Aidsfonds and an individual consultant.

The need for social distancing in light of COVID-19 has led to an unprecedented increase in reliance on digital technology. Many organisations have migrated to digital options in their operations. Employees are already working fully remotely. This webinar addressed the remaining question about to what extent we have been effectively able to digitalise our interventions on SRHR/HIV to reach young people.



The word cloud illustrates the main characteristics webinar participants identified of effective HIV & SRHR interventions in digital spaces.




Share-Net  
Netherlands



# DIGITALISING INTERVENTIONS ON SRHR AND HIV FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE EASTERN EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA (EECA) REGION

By Elena Kiryushina (Russia), Youth Officer at UNAIDS and Yana Panfilova (Ukraine), founder of the Teenergizer movement

The conclusions drawn in the table below are informed by a UNAIDS consultation with young people from EECA to inform the UNAIDS strategy development and by [Teenergizer's](#) experience with support groups for teens living with HIV, internships and online peer-to-peer trainings and broadcasts.

 Opportunities	 Challenges	 Knowledge gaps
<p>The digitalisation of HIV and SRHR interventions can save time and resources</p>	<p>COVID impacts young people's access to HIV prevention, treatment, and support services (due to insufficient facilities, limited financial resources, reshuffling of priorities), particularly young key populations</p>	<p>(Re-)invent creative and innovative approaches: We do have to consider growing tiredness of young people in digital space and rethink and improve approaches continuously.</p>
<p>In times of the pandemic, youth spend more time online (improving their online and digital literacy) looking for services of psychological support and information about SRHR &amp; HIV prevention</p>	<p>COVID may increase the funding gap due to the economic collapse in countries and particularly youth-led organisations find it difficult to find partnerships and to scale up work</p>	<p>How can we master the hybrid approach: Once the COVID-19 circumstances allow, there's space to improve the blended provision of offline &amp; online interventions</p>
<p>Some young people have become more cautious regarding health issues in general (opportunity to package interventions on HIV / SRHR together with COVID-19 prevention measures and messages)</p>	<p>Advocacy work has been aggravated online as well as offline, as leaders are focusing their efforts on the health aspects directly related with the virus</p>	<p>How to effectively overcome the digital divide to reach remote areas: The webinar touched upon solutions to connectivity problems (radio, including internet packages in programme funds etc.).</p>
<p>Digital spaces make it easier for youth to connect and peer-to-peer counselling has shown to be a very effective method (overcoming trust issues youth feel when addressing sensitive SRHR&amp;HIV issues with adults)</p>		



While in Africa and the Caribbean, adolescent girls and young women are at higher risk of being newly infected with HIV, in the EECA region adolescent boys and young men are at higher risk. Worldwide infections among youth aged 15-24 years have declined 47% between 2000 and 2019, but EECA is one of the few regions where absolute numbers continued to grow over the last five years.



Have a look at [UNAIDS' extensive data collection](#) on HIV epidemiology, programme coverage and finance and up-to-date information on the HIV epidemic.



[Listen to a message](#) from UNAIDS Executive Director Winnie Byanyima with important messages on HIV & COVID-19.



Do not miss the UNAIDS' call for proposals on youth, SRHR & COVID-19 opening on 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2020 on the [UNAIDS website!](#)



Read up on the [results from the Dance4Life online comprehensive sexuality education](#) needs assessment and outcomes of first impact evaluations of this digital version in countries like Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Ukraine.

## EXERCISE TO EXPERIENCE A DIGITAL INTERVENTION

By Muneeb Arshad (Pakistan) and Sajan Shrestha (Nepal), Trainer4Life

The two young Trainers4Life showcased a participatory digital exercise during the webinar focusing on the topic of personal boundaries. Participants were given the option to express their responses to statements either with their hands (camera on) or in written in the chat (camera off).

Participants experienced that the evaluation of situations that may or may not cross one's boundaries differ widely from person to person. The youth facilitators engaged a group discussion that concluded with the following takeaways:

The exercise included statements like:

*Your partner keeps a condom in their wallet/purse.*

*Your parents want to arrange a partner for your marriage.*

*Your friend makes negative comments about your outfit.*



### Everyone has different boundaries

Participants reflected on the significance of understanding one's personal, social and cultural background and its impact on setting boundaries.

### Communicating personal boundaries is challenging

Participants recommend to engage in conversations rather than one sided expressions, to ask questions and provide answers to manage both sides' expectations.

### Addressing boundaries is helpful

Participants stress the importance of open communication about personal boundaries in relation to promoting mutual respect and trust, conflict reductions and sense of belonging in relationships.

# THE CASE FOR DIGITALISING INTERVENTIONS ON SRHR & HIV FOR YOUTH IN MEXICO

By Idana Rodas Pulgar (Mexico), Coordinator for Regional Love Matters Programme

The RNW Media programme called Love Matters, in Mexico translates into the invitation to openly speak about sex and love (*Hablemos de Sexo y Amor*) – providing free and clear information in digital spaces for young people aged 18-30 years without prejudices.

Idana Rodas Pulgar stressed that growing digitalisation also led to a infodemic, where fake news and evidence-based sources are sometimes hard to distinguish. As a response, Love Matters uses appealing graphic design and accessible but confidential online spaces for the provision of trust-worthy and scientifically backed-up information for young people. In moderated fora, young people can openly ask their questions and receive accompaniment from specialists as well as peers. These are the main learnings from *Hablemos de Sexo y Amor* in times of the pandemic:



The opportunity for effective digital interventions to **reach many more young people**: uncertainties and restrictions related to COVID-19 have contributed to twice as many visitors on the programme's website.



The **importance of good contextualisation** of digital SRHR & HIV interventions: For instance, when providing online counseling to youth in Venezuela, the situational crisis context called for a different approach as limited financial resources means a decision between buying contraceptives or food!



Youth adopt the programme's entry point of sexual pleasure in their search terms which suggest they are mainly interested in topics like penis shapes and sizes, how to make love and feminine orgasm. So the programme developed accompaniment that **merged information on pleasure with prevention and consent**.



**Timely adaption and constant reaction to new themes** related to circumstances during the pandemic: Love Matters developed the "stay at home"-campaign and responded to concerns and questions about sex and love during quarantine.



**Effective participation and reach on Instagram-live sessions**: *Hablemos de Amor* hosted 51 live events with a reach of 700-1200 people on each of these "social listening" sessions with youth on Instagram, thereby creating live spaces allowed for spaces for youth to engage with each other and ask their questions.

## FINAL REFLECTIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS

Social media plays a very important role in reaching young people

Be innovative and see opportunities

You can still facilitate great activities online!

Engage with the young people community by putting us in their shoes

Know your target group and what they need

We have to keep learning and improving the digital services to support, guide and engage with youth! There are many opportunities but also risks to consider and mitigate!

Engaging presentations & inspiring discussions

every challenges gives an opportunity

That digital interventions can be as effective as face-to-face sessions.