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**Sexual and Reproductive “Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviour and Practices” research report for youth target groups –  
FGDs i IDIs Report**

**Final Report**

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## 1. Summary of results

### **Social support and connectedness with family/community/friends**

- Rare REA nationality speakers stated they can discuss relationships and sex issues with parents. Bringing this topic on they mostly consider as conversation. Parents are mostly those who start these conversations.
- Serb nationality speakers stated more often they can discuss with both parents (although more often with mothers) issues related to relationships, sex and everything they might be interested in. Sometimes parents, sometimes girls initiate these conversations. It seems that conversations rarely give specific instructions and information on protection but more often general recommendations.
- Most of REA girls have never tried to discuss issues related to sex life with their parents since they consider those subjects as taboo.
- Most of REA girls assume they could discuss these subjects with their sisters if they would be the same age, which was not the case with our speakers. In a contrary brothers, regardless their age, are not been considered as potential speakers.
- Serb nationality girls do not stress similar relationship with brothers but they prefer to talk to sisters. They believe it is more natural and socially accepted to discuss intimate subjects with relatives of same sex.
- Discussion with women in the community is also one of ways to collect information related to these subjects and some of REA girls emphasized that is easier to talk to female neighbors then to relatives.
- Accordingly, conclusion is that REA girls receive very few information from their parents, family and community members and those are mostly warnings on danger sexual intercourse can cause, primarily stressing the immorality of that act. Sexually active girls are not desired as future spouses, all that in order to insure socially accepted behavior.
- On the other hand, Serb girls do not mention the pressure about not having sexual intercourse from family and mostly follow advices received from family related to relationships and sex life.
- REA girls emphasize they talk to friends about relationships and sexual intercourse. If they have a close friend they mutually exchange thoughts and try to define the best behavior towards their future boyfriends. But, mostly none of them is informed enough about sexual intercourse. Personal expectations and experience are usually not discussed even with friends, due to shyness and lack of full mutual confidence.

- Serb girls more often discuss with friends and have possibility to ask all questions they are interested for. However, informative value of these conversations depends on speaker's knowledge and ability to transfer findings, gained mostly by personal experience.
- Girls who have close friend base their decisions on friend's opinion, but if such does not exist friends' advises are taken with certain reserve, depending on nature of their relationship.
- Most of the FGDs male participants mentioned to have frequent talk about sex with their peers. Main discussions about sex can be divided into two categories: young people talk about sex when they want to make jokes among each other about girls that they see, and they communicate to each other information that are related to sexual activities and sexually transmitted disease.
- As some of REA participants are already married and consider themselves well informed about sexual and reproductive health, they often provide advices to their younger friends.
- Albanian girls from FGDs think that the boys of their ages speak to their friends in the same way, even though they don't talk about it as seriously as females do.
- Young men also believe that girls discuss these issues but to have different approach to sexually related subjects, primarily because they are more open.

### **Sexual behavior/ risk/ perception of risk**

- The FGDs female respondents thought that in general people shouldn't have sex until marriage, and they think that the society in general thinks of it as a bad thing, and that they view somebody who had sexual intercourse differently, negatively.
- Even Albanian male participants agreed that it is not acceptable for their families to have sex before marriage, they emphasized time has changed and most of them claim that it is normal to commence sexual intercourse before marriage. Serb participants also think that men dominated society has changed and both, boys and girls commence pre marriage sexual intercourse more free.
- All young REA participants claimed the need to wait to a certain age, so that they can have a sexual intercourse. Usually, it includes first to get married, and have sex with their partners.
- Female participants thing that insecurity in themselves is one reason that leads young people to have sex. Also some of the young people don't have enough information about risks that are involved with sexual intercourse. Pressure from their peers to have sex was not considered as the primary reason that young male start to have sex.

- A girl usually does it with a person she trusts. Boys will start with sex life once they feel ready and they do not mind the partner.
- For all the female participants it was unacceptable to have sexual intercourse before marriage.
- Those participants who have a serious relationship usually don't have sexual intercourse with other people. But there are cases when they have affairs with other people.
- Participants think that the risks that come from sex are pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, other SST, unwanted children and giving them for adoption. They think that most of the people have information about risks involved with sexual intercourse, especially in urban places, but it would be better if more programs that give information about these issues should be held.
- Girls think that the risks women take differ, because guys don't have to be worried about pregnancy.
- Participants have expressed the need for more knowledge about the risk prevention factors against STD. Some of them mentioned abstinence as a risk prevention measure, whereas others mainly mentioned use of condoms.
- Safe sex would not include only the use of condoms. The girls think that there is no safe sex for young people. Those who have more experience or who are married might have safe sex.
- The girls are usually the ones who insist in the use of condoms, and sometimes some boys try to avoid using them.
- Only two IDIs participants were sexually active. Both of them are Serbs and although they said they have been sexually active they did not want to discuss it.
- Reasons REA girls have not been sexually active yet are mutually connected. The main cause is cultural environment they live in and lack of information.

### **Use of sexual and reproductive health services**

- REA girls who have visited services where they received information on intercourse, contraception, sexually transmitted diseases, sex, etc. mostly visited centers that existed in their towns, which organized lectures and group sessions on different subjects. As they have not been informed about services centers provide, most of girls paid a visit to find out what is it all about.
- Girls who have not visited centers yet consider these institutions as places where 'training' for sexual intercourses is offered, all in accordance with public opinion in their communities.

- Experience REA girls have show that fears and community prejudices once overcome will bring them to the centers they will continue to visit as long as programs last, due to information they receive there, feeling they are accepted and nice atmosphere.
- FGDs respondents held a very positive view about these services, and they think that they lack such services in their community, and that more should be done, especially in schools, because they think that the young people need more information.
- FGDs respondents thought that telling people that you are going to give them advice, or going to schools when they have classes where all the children are present would be the best way to include all the young people. Girls from IDIs believe that established institutions in their towns would push young people to visit them.
- FGD participants believe that services provided for boys and girls should be the same, but IDI participants emphasize that is better to have separate programs for boys and girls, not because they have different needs, but in order to make participants feel more comfortable and relaxed while spending time in institution.

## **2. Methodology**

### **Introduction**

Social researchers generally agree that the most effective research designs are those that utilize various methodological approaches to complement one another – primarily qualitative and quantitative methods. In cases where the problem under investigation is relatively unexplored in the cultural, sociological and even psychological dimensions, it is best to take the first research steps with a qualitative approach – primarily focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. Through such groups and interviews we gain insight into the complete background of opinions and attitudes, reasons, motivations of the target groups relating to the issue being researched. In addition, the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews are an effective way to test some of our initial hypothesis and assumptions. It is important to mention that it is the best manner in which to prepare the questionnaire for a quantitative study by testing, exploring, and defining certain questions in the qualitative research.

### **Method**

In-depth interviews and focus groups.

### **Recruitment**

Prism Research has a widespread network consisting of interviewers, controllers, coordinators and supervisors in all of the municipalities in Kosovo – including Albanian and Serb majority areas and all other ethnic minorities. All interviewers have completed rigorous training in the survey methodology and most of them have participated at least in 5 survey research projects in Kosovo in the past 12 months.

Interviewer/recruiters utilized the Snowball method for the selection of potential respondents from various target groups.

In the above-described manner, for each of individual in-depth interviews and one participant in focus group - a minimum of 2 potential respondents were identified.

On the basis of this selection, to had identified optimum 20 respondents for a minimum 10 in-depth interviews finalized, or 48 participants for 4 focus groups with 6 participants in each.

In the final selection of participants who will participate in the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, other than the main criteria, particular attention was paid to the following:

1. that persons who are related to interviewers and employees of Prism Research not be recruited and that participants not be related;
2. that participants are not employed or involved in any way with media, marketing organizations, market research or public opinion polling agencies;
3. that they not have participated in any types of public opinion polling or focus group discussions in the past 12 months.

### **Target groups and locations**

Major target groups for in-depth interviews:

- 2 pilot interviews – one with Serb and one with REA
- 4 Serb
- 4 REA

Major target groups for focus groups:

- 1 Albanian men – Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje
- 1 Albanian girls - Lipjan or Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje
- 1 Serbian men - Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje
- 1 REA men – Lipjan or Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje

### **Moderation**

The interviewing of the respondents for IDI's and FGD's were conducted by our permanent external staff in Kosovo (engaged on a project basis). Interviewers are psychologists or sociologists and they were coordinated and supervised by the Project Manager from the Prism Research head office who heads the qualitative research department.

### **Transcripts**

The discussions of IDI's and FGD's had been fully transcribed in the local language and then summarized into English.

## **Discussion Guide**

Prism Research developed the Discussion Guides for in-depth interviews and focus groups after the key areas, topics and issues are discussed and identified by the Client and Prism Research.

## **Organization**

All focus group discussions were audio taped - in a non-intrusive manner.

Participants for IDI's and FGD's received token honorarium for the participation.

Refreshments were served.

### **3. Detailed findings**

#### **3.1. Social support and connectedness with family/community/friends**

##### **Parents, family and community members**

Rare REA nationality speakers stated they can discuss relationships and sex issues with parents. Bringing this topic they mostly consider as conversation. Everything is based on parents' remarks whether they can or can not have boyfriend and relationship but sexual intercourse should be prolonged until they get married. Thus, parents are mostly those who start these conversations lecturing their attitudes and desirable behavior while other party does not even participate in 'discussion'. Even when girls are encouraged to ask (mother!) for issues they are interested in, parents' approach is not different.

*I live with my parents and with my family. I talk to my parents sometimes about sex, relationships. They are the ones who start the discussions. They ask me things about myself. They tell me that I shouldn't engage in such things. They don't scold at me. (female, 15 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

*I start the conversations with my mother, I ask her about things, she tells me what is good and what is bad, because it's a shame to talk about such things with the father. ... She tells me about boys from which neighborhood are better, how to do things, and she tells me to have boyfriends, and kiss with them, but not to have sex with them. My mother knows that I have a boyfriend right now, and she told me that I can go out with him, but that I should be careful, because men are traitors, all they want to do is have sex with them, and after you have done it with them, they don't even recognize you. So it's better if you go out with the guy, but not have sex with him. (female, 17 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

*She tells me that sex is not good, because if I do it once, I will want to do it again with other men. And the best thing is to have sex only with your husband. (female, 17 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

*Sometimes for some things I feel free to talk to my mother, but not for all the things and I don't tell her all the truth. Sometimes she initiates the conversations, to give me some advice about how to behave. But I don't listen to what she says to me. And to my father never. (female, 19 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

Serb girls stated more often they can discuss with both parents (although more often with mothers) issues related to relationships sex and everything they might be interested in. Sometimes parents, sometimes girls initiate these conversations. However, it seems

conversations rarely give specific instructions and information on protection but more often general recommendations, such as: ‘Take care’, ‘Be smart’, etc.

*I initiate conversation with parents... Nothing special actually, mostly general. (female, IDI 8)*

*I don't know exactly, sometimes for example I ask for some advice. (female, IDI 7)*

*Well, mostly about the fact that we should be careful about who we go out and who we behave, etc. (female, IDI 10)*

Most of REA girls have never tried to talk to parents about subjects related to sex life. Namely, those topics are *taboo* and although they are not exactly forbidden for discussion, common practice of keeping quiet about it shows to young people it is not desirable to discuss it.

*We don't talk about these issues in my family and I can't even imagine myself talking to them. (female, 18 years old, Roma, uneducated, unemployed)*

Therefore, REA speakers state they are ashamed to express their interest for sex life subject to parents and also afraid their parents will consider them as abnormal if they express this initiative (broad spectrum of characteristics are considered: sexual promiscuity, sexual active, interested for sex). They are afraid their parents might take some actions in order to prevent ‘such’ behavior (they mostly believe it would be forbidden for them to leave the house).

*I never talk to them about boys or things like that, because I am ashamed, and you are not supposed to talk to your parents about those things. I am ashamed, and I should also be afraid to talk about these things with them. (female, 15 years old, Roma, three years of elementary education, unemployed)*

*We don't talk about these issues in my family and I can't even imagine myself talking to them. (female, 18 years old, Roma, uneducated, unemployed)*

*I feel like if I opened myself and said something about my experiences they would punish me in some way, and it would make my matters worse. So I don't initiate these kind of talks with them, and they neither do so. But I know that if I said something, they wouldn't be happy to hear such things from me. (female, 16 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

Most of REA girls assume they could discuss these subjects with their sisters if they would be the same age, which was not the case with our speakers. In a contrary brothers, regardless their age, are not been considered as potential speakers, primarily due to their sex, which determines their role towards sisters in men dominated society, that is role of parents (almost). Some girls say that brothers are even more strict ‘tradition guardians’ and are more afraid of their reaction than parents’. They are usually not speakers they can count on when comes to sex related subjects.

*I keep the things secret from my brothers because I feel ashamed if I told them my personal things, and also I am afraid that they might say something. (female, 19 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

*My brothers know that I have a boyfriend, but they didn't do anything to me, they just told me to be careful with him. I listen to them, in order not to be in trouble. (female, 15 years old, Roma, three years of elementary education, unemployed)*

*I am more afraid from my brothers than from my parents. My brothers are very strict and I am very afraid of them. (female, 15 years old, Roma, three years of elementary education, unemployed)*

*I don't talk to any sisters or brothers, because I have five sisters which are all married. ... I have cousins and other people with whom I could talk, but I never talk to them. I don't talk to my neighbors or anybody else about these issues. (female, 15 years old, Roma, three years of elementary education, unemployed)*

*I neither talk about these issues with my brothers or sisters, because I am not used to. They have never opened such conversations with me, so I didn't mention anything. But I don't think that they would understand either. The older people don't understand the way we feel and they don't know how things are going these days, so they don't even start the conversation. And since I know that they wouldn't understand me, I don't talk to them. (female, 16 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

Serb girls do not stress similar relationship with brothers but they prefer to talk to sisters. They believe it is more natural and socially accepted to discuss intimate subjects with relatives of same sex. Although relationships and exclusions are not as strict as with REA girls, the feeling of shame and/or fear of brothers' opinion make them discuss sex related subjects with female family members that are emotionally close to them and have similar age.

*With my sister more. (female, IDI 8)*

*Well, I talk with my sister a lot freely, but not with my brother. (female, IDI 7)*

*Most frequently I talk to my cousin. (female, IDI 9)*

Some REA girls say they have tried to talk to older (already married) sisters but none of them said that was open, studious and serious conversation on sexual subjects. Even if they talk to older sister information received support traditional view but not precise and useful information about sexual behavior and reproductive health.

*About these issues I have talked to my sister as well. She used to go out with a guy, and then when she wanted to get married, even though her fiancée didn't believe her, she turned out to be a virgin. So she told me that this is the most important thing and that sex is dangerous. (female, 17 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

A number of REA girls say they can talk to female cousins of the similar age but more about relationships than to sex life but never fully open.

*I have also some cousins, my uncle's daughters who are approximately the same age as me, and I talk sometimes to them, but I don't feel free to talk with no other member of my family. (female, 18 years old, Roma, uneducated, unemployed)*

*I talk with my sisters' daughters and with my cousins, my aunt's sons, because they are younger and more understandable, because they are interested about these things as well. With them I feel free to talk about most of the things, but not about detailed things about sex or protection from pregnancy or serious things like these. (female, 16 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

Discussion with women in the community is also one of ways to collect information related to these subjects and some of REA girls emphasized that is easier to talk to female neighbors than to relatives. However, received information are mostly related to choice of proper boyfriend for relationship and potentially for marriage and general recommendations about behavior and rarely the facts related to reproductive and sexual health.

*I don't feel comfortable talking to my mother either, but sometimes some women from the community give me advice. They initiate the discussions because i feel embarrassed if i talk about these issues with older people, from my family, and from the community as well. (female, 18 years old, Roma, uneducated, unemployed)*

Girls state that part of 'received' information do not have exact source but come from way of living in their community. They can not name the persons they have received information from but they stick to it in both situations, when it comes to avoid sexual intercourse or to mention that subject. Sometimes they wish to break these unwritten rules they do not have a pattern for such behavior.

*Nobody tells me directly not to have something with boys. (female, 15 years old, Roma, three years of elementary education, unemployed)*

*I don't even know what would I say, or how would I say it, because I don't feel comfortable enough to talk about these issues with them. I have never discussed such issues with them, so I wouldn't know how to start such conversations. And also I think that they wouldn't accept the way things are going anyway, so that's why I never open such conversations. (female, 19 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

Hence, girls receive very few information from their parents, family and community members and those are mostly warnings on danger sexual intercourse can cause, primarily stressing the immorality of that act. Sexually active girls are not desired as future spouses, all that in order to insure socially accepted behavior.

Based on said, these information supported by fear of punishment if they break it, determine their behavior and prevent even those girls who feel ready and have wish for sexual intercourse to fulfill their needs.

*My mother sometimes says that I should wait for those things until I get married, and that it will be easier for me to find a better husband if I didn't have many partners before. I would like to have a boyfriend, and spend some time with boys, if it wasn't for the things my mother tells me, and for my brothers. Sometimes I feel bad that I am not allowed to do these things with guys, and I would like to, but I guess that my family knows what is best for me, and that after all they are right and that I should wait until the right time is for me. I feel like I am prepared now, maybe not for sex, but at least for going out with guys, but if I do that I will get in trouble with my family. (female, 15 years old, Roma, three years of elementary education, unemployed)*

*I think that I should do it only after I get married because this is what I think it is right, and also my family wouldn't like it if I had sex before I got married. And the guys even if they have sex before they get married, when they want to get married they like more a girl that never had sex before. (female, 18 years old, Roma, uneducated, unemployed)*

Serb girls do not mention the pressure about not having sexual intercourse from family and mostly follow advices received from family related to relationships and sex life.

*Does that information influence the way you act?*

*Of course it does. (female, IDI 7)*

*Very much. (female, IDI 8)*

## **Role of friends**

Girls emphasize they talk to friends about relationships and sexual intercourse. If they have a close friend they mutually exchange thoughts and try to define the best behavior towards their future boyfriends. But, mostly none of them is informed enough (even not at all) about sexual intercourse (except general belief that sex is great pressure). This type of conversation has small informative value from preserve reproductive and sexual health point of view.

*I think it is a topic about which all the girls are worried, and they talk about it, especially with friends. (female, 17 years old, Albanian FGD, Fushë Kosovë)*

*I have a friend and I talk about everything with her. I get along mostly only with her, and nobody else. With my friend I talk about everything, whatever comes out in our minds. I am not embarrassed to talk to my friend, because I consider her to be a sister, and we talk about things, and we never deject each other. (female, 15 years old, Roma, three years of elementary education, unemployed)*

*With my friend we talk about boys, we talk all the time, we talked last night. We talk about which boy is provoking us and things like these. With her I feel free to discuss about these issues. (female, 15 years old, Roma, three years of elementary education, unemployed)*

*We usually talk seriously with my friend, I tell her everything, she tells me everything, but sometimes we make fun out of things and laugh with these talks. (female, 15 years old, Roma, three years of elementary education, unemployed)*

*My friends don't help me regarding issues related to sexual relationships, not a lot. Because, most of them are like me, and so on. (female, IDI 7)*

If there is a group of friends they mostly talk generally about these issues, there is no exchange of personal experiences and stating personal attitudes. They mostly talk about love in general and make jokes of sexual nature due to feeling of shame and socially inconveniency of those subjects. But there is no exchange of experienced and reliable information related to reproductive and sexual health.

*I am speaking about myself personally, with my friends we discuss these issues in groups, but with a friend that is closer to you, you discuss personal things, something more intimate, but we talk in groups as well. (female, 17years old, Albanian FGD)*

*About these issues I talk also with my friends, but with them also we don't go in details, it's just general things. (female, 16 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

*I talk to my friends as well. They tell me that I should go out with boys. They tell me to get boyfriends. They tell me with which one I should go out. My friends as well have boyfriends. I like having boyfriends, so I don't feel anything bad when they tell me to go out with boys, because it's my desire as well. (female, 15 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

*We generally talk about love and relationships, but we don't talk about sex or the protection against pregnancy or STI's with them either. Even when we mention things like these it's through jokes, but we don't discuss them seriously. I feel embarrassed to talk about these things with them, and also I am afraid that they would take me wrong and think something about me. (female, 16 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

*I feel a little bit uncomfortable by these talks, because I don't like talking about boys. ... It's all right when we make jokes and laugh with these things, but I don't think that we should have sex, therefore conversations about sex. (female, 18 years old, Roma, uneducated, unemployed)*

Personal expectations and experience are not shared with friend, partly due to feeling of shame and on the other hand due to lack of full confidence among them. There is fear that 'information will be spread' which keep girls closed and insincere during these discussions.

*Young people feel ashamed to discuss such private issues even with friends, and sometimes even if they had sexual intercourse they don't talk about that, they keep it secret for themselves. People like to talk about other people's business, so in order to be safer and have a private life they keep these things for themselves, away from*

*the other people in the village. (female, 16 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

*I talk only with my peers because with them I feel more secure discussing things that are bothering me. I feel free to discuss with them most of the issues, but I don't talk about all the things with them. And I think that they neither do it with me. Even if I had sex, I don't think that I would admit that to my friends, because I don't want words to spread all over the village and this would be bad when I want to get married. (female, 19 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

Serb girls more often discuss with friends and have possibility to ask all questions they are interested for. However, informative value of these conversations depends on speaker's knowledge and ability to transfer findings, gained mostly by personal experience. Quite often result is not full introduction of relevant information related to reproductive and sexual health but getting isolated, mostly incompatible information.

*An open type of conversation. Serious, and sometimes through joking. (female, IDI 8)*

*Mostly about unwanted pregnancy, about means used against unwanted pregnancy, etc. (female, IDI 8)*

*We talk about everything in general. (female, IDI 9)*

Girls who have close friend base their decisions on friend's opinion, but if such does not exist friends' advises are taken with certain reserve, depending on nature of their relationship.

*She doesn't tell me what I should do, and I don't tell her. And there is no other older person to tell me what I should do if boys tease me, because I don't talk to anybody older. My friend tells me things about herself as well, and sometimes we tell each other what to do when a boy seduces us. The things she tells me are useful to help me decide what I should do. (female, 15 years old, Roma, three years of elementary education, unemployed)*

*The information they give me is more or less important and it doesn't affect my behaviour. I am glad when they give me some advice, but I don't like them to dictate what I do with my life. (female, 16 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

*I listen to what my friends tell me, and they down there as well. But I don't listen to them considering this part. (female, 15 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

*But I value a lot the advice my peers give me, and take them into consideration, but they don't impact me a lot because in the end I am the one who says the last word. (female, 19 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

Most of the FGDs male participants mentioned to have frequent talk about sex with their peers. Main discussions about sex can be divided into two categories: young people talk about sex when they want to make jokes among each other about girls that they see, and they communicate to each other information that are related to sexual activities and sexually transmitted disease. Furthermore, participants mentioned about half of the conversation about sex with their peers to have humorous connotation. Za razliku od participnata srpske nacionalnosti, most of the Albanian participants replied to have talked with their female friends about sex as well, uglavnom u školi i kroz šalu. Dok REA participanti navode da ne razgovaraju o seksu sa svojim prijateljicama.

*I talk about sex with my friends every day. We mainly talk how we would have sex with them. (Male, 16 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*I talk often about sex with my friends. We make jokes and comment how other girls look - what we would do to them, if we were given the chance, and so on. (Male, 16 years old, REA FGD)*

*We mostly talk about personal safety, contraception, preservatives and so on. (Male, FGD)*

*We talk about sex even when females are present in a group. We mainly talk about condoms, how someone uses it and some do not... Some times we laugh about these things, but sometimes we talk seriously about it. (Male, 16 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*Whenever we talk about sex with our female friends, it's through laughter. We laugh and make fun with each other about this topic. Girls talk about sex as well. They share their experiences and discuss what they see on TV. (Male, 17 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*We never talk about sex with our female friends. (Male, 17 years old, REA FGD)*

As some of REA participants are already married and consider themselves well informed about sexual and reproductive health, they often provide advices to their younger friends. Wrong perception of information regarding sex support quotes related to information received by porn movies. However, there are positive examples. Obviously, better educated participants have different approach to issues related to relationships and sexual intercourses.

*I am married. I have a lot of sexual experience. I have been married since I am 13, and so far I have had six wives. I can give advice to young people about anything related to sex. My younger friends ask me for advice, when they want to have sex with females. (Male, 21 years old, REA FGD)*

*Mainly I get informed about sex through TV. My family have a digital receiver, and there are some programs that emit sex movies. (Male, 17 years old, REA FGD)*

*When I talk to my friends about sex, I try to communicate to them my knowledge I have about AIDS. I have attended a course in the police school in Vushtrri, where we were explained what is AIDS and how to prevent receiving that disease. (Male, 17 years old, REA FGD)*

Few participants said that sex is not the most important subject in their conversations, they rather talk about other subjects.

*Although we are young, we talk about sex with our friends. We usually discuss how sexual intercourse is performed. However, we don't discuss sex too often. We have other discussions that we have, as for example sports and movies. (Male, 16 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*I mainly talk about my friends about sports, school, and so on. We do not discuss much about sex. I don't recall when was the last time we talked about sex. (Male, 18 years old, Albanian FGD)*

Albanian girls from FGDs think that the boys of their ages speak to their friends in the same way, even though they don't talk about it as seriously as females do. They think that boys experience these things differently from girls, since having, respectively not having sex until marriage is not as important for boys as it is for girls, because for them you can't tell if they had sex or not, and it is not such a big deal if they had sex, while for girls it is.

*Boys talk more about sex with their friends, even though I think not as seriously as girls do, they take this thing more as a joke. (Female, 18 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*I think that when a girl has sexual intercourse with a guy, she won't be secure, she has fallen in a lower level. And for guys I think that it is the same, for them it's not important. (Female, 16 years old, Albanian FGD)*

Young men also believe that girls discuss these issues too but to have different approach to sexually related subjects, primarily because they are more open. Expressing affection to other sex is taken as an example.

Whereas males are more sincere about their feelings toward females that they like, females are more reserved and do not discuss so openly whom they sympathise.

*Maybe they talk about it more than men do. (Male, FGD)*

*Yes, girls talk among themselves about sex, although I did not hear them talking.... You can tell they talk about sex from the face they make, and the laugh they have when something related to sex is discussed. (Male, 17 years old, REA FGD)*

*We [males] talk about sex differently. When we like a girl, then we go to her and tell her. Whereas girls only talk to each other, and they hesitate to tell to a boy that she likes him. (Male, 16 years old, Albanian FGD)*

### 3.2. Sexual behaviour/ risk/ perception of risk

#### Commencement of sexual activity

The FGDs female respondents thought that in general people shouldn't have sex until marriage, and they think that the society in general thinks of it as a bad thing, and that they view somebody who had sexual intercourse differently, negatively. They think that for females is more difficult than it is for boys if they had sexual intercourse before marriage. Their opinions differentiated regarding the percentage of young people who are sexually active before marriage. The rates differed from 30% of young people up to 75 %. They all agreed that the percentage is large.

*I can't give an exact percentage, but I know that there are cases. It isn't a very high percentage, but when you take into consideration our age, the percentage is very high. (Female, 17 years old, Albanian FGD)*

Even Albanian male participants agreed that it is not acceptable for their families to have sex before marriage, they emphasized time has changed and most of them claim that it is normal to commence sexual intercourse before marriage. They see sex as a matter of getting to know each other better with their future partner, but they confirm double standards – those related to pre marriage sexual experience by men and others related to pre marriage sexual experience by women.

*For my family it would not be acceptable for me to have sex before marriage. I wouldn't mind having sex before marriage; I would even like to have sex before marriage. (Male, 16 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*We are living in a different time from the one that our parents lived in. Twenty five years ago my father got married without knowing my mother. Now, we have a chance to go out with a girl, to have sex with her, get engaged, and then get married. (Male, 18 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*It is acceptable to have sex before marriage. I do not mind if a girl is virgin or not. (Male, 16 years old, Albanian FGD, Fushe Kosove)*

*It's not acceptable for females to have sex either before marriage. First they are controlled by their parents, and later the husband looks if she is a virgin or not. (Male, 17 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*Friends that I have, most of the relations that we start are because of sex. Some friends have longer relationships, some shorter. When we are done with them - when we have sex with these female - then we brake up. (Male, 18 years old, Albanian FGD)*

Assumptions regarding the number of young people having pre marriage sexual experience are in accordance with all mentioned above. Namely, men assume that number of men with such experience is much higher than number of women.

*I believe that less than 50 per cent of the females of my age have had sex, whereas some 99 per cent of the males of my age have had sex so far. Usually males have sex with older females, although it might occur that they have sex with younger person. (Male, 19 years old, Albanian FGD)*

Also the opinions differed regarding the age when young people start becoming sexually active. Some thought that some young people start having sex since the age of 15 and even earlier than that, while some thought that they usually begin by the age of 18-19. Serb young men stated they have become sexually active at age of 16.

*I have started to have sex at the age of sixteen. Before I had sex I hesitated to talk about sex and to have sex. Now I have overcome that difficulty.... Sixteen is the average age people start to have sex. (Male, 18 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*Young people start to have sex at the age of 17 or 18 years old. (Male, 17 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*Generally they start around the age of 16, if you take it from our experience. Although some start earlier, and some later. (Male, FGD)*

*In the schools they don't organize some kind of lectures about sexual intercourse, about what it causes, and other questions, and to show that it is a harm to have sexual intercourse during the younger years and that they shouldn't have sexual relationships until they get married. (Female, 16 years old, Albanian FGD)*

Serb participants also believe that time has changed within men dominated society and they believe that both, boys and girls are more free now to commence pre marriage sexual intercourses. However, tradition can not be fast and fully changed it is not recommendable for girls to 'praise' their sexual activity. Therefore they still do not talk about their sexual activities that often.

*Girls get married younger than men, and that they have sexual experience before marriage, but they don't talk about it. (Male, FGD)*

All young REA participants claimed the need to wait to a certain age, so that they can have a sexual intercourse. Usually, it includes first to get married, and have sex with their partners. Some participants explained this to be part of their tradition. As they get married young they mostly have sexual intercourses with their wives. On the other hand, older participants claimed that most people experience sex before getting married. Usually it's a person whom everybody knows that she has sex with more people for money.

*It's in our tradition to wait for the older brothers first to get married. After the older brothers get married, then the younger ones can get married as well. If they*

*do not get married until they early twenties, I might not wait for them any longer.  
(Male, 17 years old, REA FGD)*

*To have sex before marriage is to get 'spoiled'. If you do that, then when you get married and when your wife goes to her parents than you are not going to be loyal to your wife – you are going to have sex with someone else. Whereas when you wait to have sex after marriage, than you will wait for your wife, you will not cheat her. (Male, 16 years old, REA FGD)*

*Usually, youth start to have sex at the age of 17-19. It's this period that they get mature enough to have sex. Usually everybody gets married at about this age and they start to have sex with their wives. (Male, 17 years old, REA FGD)*

*I have had sex before I got married. Most of the young people have sex before they get married. They usually do it with some prostitute. I know a female that did not say no to anybody. Almost every neighbourhood has such a person, and everybody knows that they can go to her, give her something and have sex with her. (Male, 21 years old, REA FGD)*

Girls from FGDs mentioned that parents usually are against sexual intercourse in the younger years, because they are afraid that it will damage their daughter or their sons. That's why they take care of their children and keep an eye on them. Some young people think that it is wrong to have sexual intercourse, and they give suggestions to others how they shouldn't do it. But there are also others who accept this, and they say that if you want to be cool and modernized you should have sexual intercourse as soon as possible.

*I think that sexual intercourse in the younger years affects the parents as well, because they are scared, they are terrified that their daughter will be damaged, in this case both genders. (Female, 20 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*There are young people who approve these things, but there are others who don't. But there are some who think that in order to keep up with the trend, you should do these things, and you should do them sooner. (Female, 17 years old, Albanian FGD)*

The FGDs female participants think that before somebody had sexual intercourse they usually heard talks from their families, most of the parents tell their children about what to do. However, it is the question how much these advices influence improvement of information related to need to use contraception, certain contraceptive methods and ways to preserve reproductive health and health in general and how much are they general notes, such as: 'Be careful', 'Take care of yourself', etc. In some cases the friends as well tell each other what to do. But usually somebody comes and talks about these things more about they already had sexual intercourse. As it is socially unacceptable to have pre marriage sexual intercourse, only few young people find out about their experience.

*Advice are given mostly from the family which advice her how to protect herself.  
(Female, 17 years old, Albanian FGD).*

*There wasn't a case where somebody came and asked my friends about the intimate things, because after she did such a thing, she becomes aware and comes and asks, but then it's too late. (Female, 17 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*Especially when she knows that the society doesn't accept such cases, she keeps it secret, she doesn't speak about her experience. (Female, 18 years old, Albanian FGD)*

In a contrary, male participants emphasize they have been discussing the need and ways to protect prior to sexual intercourse.

*Most probably about protection, and ways of protecting. (Male, FGD)*

### **Reasons for having sex**

Female participants think that insecurity in themselves is one reason that leads young people to have sex. Also some of the young people don't have enough information about risks that are involved with sexual intercourse. Another reason is our age, 16-18 years old, when a youngster thinks that he or she is mature now, and wants to experience these things.

*Insecurity in themselves, because they think that they are grown up now, and that they should follow the trend, and they should have sexual intercourse, and they don't think about the consequences, or how others will look at them. (Female, 20 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*I think that they don't have enough information about these things. (Female, 18 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*The youngster thinks that he/she is grown up now, but they have a childish mind, and they make mistakes. (Female, 17 years old, Albanian FGD)*

Pressure from their peers to have sex was not considered as the primary reason that young male start to have sex. Mainly participants considered as the primary reason to be the urge that young people feel when they turn the certain age, but there is a pleasure sex can give.

*Young people start to have sex at about the age of 17. Reasons why they start to have sex is because of themselves, because they are curious. (Male, 16 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*Probably young people start to have sex because of the pleasure. (Male, FGD)*

*Young people have this urge that they commence them to have sex. They usually stop themselves not to have sex, and the urge goes away. They should do that as long as they don't settle themselves. When they achieve some conditions to get married, then they can have sex. (Male, 21 years old, REA FGD)*

*There is pressure, both from outside and from inside to have sex. There is also a desire to have sex, when you turn over 16. (Male, 16 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*I might have some pressure from aside to have sex, although I also feel the urge to have sex. However, I don't consider this pressure to be so important and I am not affected by it. (Male, 18 years old, Albanian FGD)*

- A girl usually does it with a person she trusts. FGDs female participants mentioned some of the young people want to do something good, that the rest of the friends haven't experienced yet. They think that the girls don't have enough information and they usually do it because of the pressure they feel from boys. Boys will start with sex life once they feel ready and they do not mind the partner.

*Trust is the most important thing why they do it with that person. (Female, 16 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*I was not interested to have sex until now. If I wanted to have sex, I would find some one. It might be some one that I would have to pay for sex, or some of my female friends or relatives of my female friends. (Male, 17 years old, Albanian FGD)*

For all the female participants it was unacceptable to have sexual intercourse before marriage. They usually give this advice to other people. They think that people usually don't respect girls who had too many boyfriends. Also in the future their husbands wont trust them if they already had sexual intercourse before them. They think that it effects their self perception and some people regret after they have done it, but there are others who don't. The meaning of life and the feelings of a person who had sexual intercourse differ from them.

*All of my friends don't accept such things and we give advice to others how they shouldn't have sexual intercourse. (Female, 17 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*I think that after they have evaluated what they have done, everything is going to be negative, and she is going to be the person who is going to suggest, even though not in all the cases, to others not to do what she has done. (Female, 18 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*I think that love is above all, but not above moral. (Female, 18 years old, Albanian FGD)*

Boys say there are persons who are not mature enough for sex, their feeling of shame prevent them to find a sexual partner for themselves. They also say that young people are afraid of sexually transmitted diseases or unwanted pregnancy because they are not informed enough. They are afraid they might be used by sexual partners in a sense that she would use their inexperience to 'trick' them and get married.

*It's about twenty per cent of young people that start late to have sex, and they start late because they are not attracted to have sex. They hesitate and they feel ashamed. (Male, 19 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*Also, there are people that are afraid of transmitted diseases. (Male, FGD)*

*However, I don't feel I am ready to have sex. There are also a lot of immoral females, and they can come to you and say that they got pregnant with you, although she had sex with someone before you and was left pregnant by that other person. (Male, 16 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*It's dangerous to have sex with these females. She might go to her father, tell him that she is in love with you and that you have had sex and that she want to marry you. In that case you have to marry her. (Male, 17 years old, REA FGD)*

Those participants who have a serious relationship usually don't have sexual intercourse with other people. But there are cases when they have affairs with other people. Respondents think that it is more common for boys to have affairs with other girls. Their opinions on percentages varied, ranging from 20% up to 40%, while for girls they thought it was more uncommon, usually 5% of young girls, ranging up to a maximum of 20%.

*The girls don't do it, because maybe they will be humiliated, that's why they are more careful. (Female, 20 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*Most people that are in a relationship, also have someone else they have sex with. Like a secret relationship with someone they are not in a relationship with. (Male, FGD)*

Participants said that they don't have much information, and they don't know any homosexual. But they think that young people usually don't accept people who have sexual relationships with persons of the same sex. They think that this is against the society, their parents and against religion values as well. They think that such persons don't feel love in fact, that they do it only for pleasure. For others, especially older, it is even more unacceptable.

*I do not know any homosexual that lives in our town. (Male, 16 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*I don't believe there are homosexuals. It does not have to be that if a male wears tight things, and spends all day talking to his female friends to be a homosexual. I think he has sex with females and it's a matter of his dressing style. (Male, 19 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*I think that is sick. If God wanted that, he would have made Adam and Steve, not Adam and Eve. (Male, FGD)*

*Those who have relationships with persons of the same gender, don't feel love toward any person, not even for their parents. (Female, 16 years old, Albanian FGD)*

## **Pressure**

Female participants think that there is pressure but not in all the cases. When the person is older, and especially if her or his friends had sexual intercourse, they would say to them to have sex. Boys especially are the ones who put pressure on their friends to have sex, and boys are under more pressure than girls, mada momci to ne potvrđuju. Također smatraju da mediji, a filmovi posebno, put pressure on young people. Respondents think that it is easy to avoid the pressure. The girls think that can do this by talking to their families, and getting advice from them, by talking to friends, to sisters or brothers.

*We haven't heard of a case that someone has been with someone from pressure. (Male, FGD)*

*Not so much. Friends can advise, but not put pressure. (Male, FGD)*

*"We are young and we still do not feel so much of a pressure to have sex. We get stimulated when we see something in TV, but that goes quickly. (Male, 17 years old, REA FGD)*

*The media does have an influence. (Male, FGD)*

*I think that if they talk to their families or their friends, and they tell them how it is wrong, it will be easier for that person to avoid the pressure. (Female, 17 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*The more advice you get from somebody, the stronger you'll be. (Female, 20 years old, Albanian FGD)*

## **Risk Taking**

Participants think that the risks that come from sex are pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, other SST, unwanted children and giving them for adoption. They think that most of the people have information about risks involved with sexual intercourse, especially in urban places, but it would be better if more programs that give information about these issues should be held. Girls think that the risks women take differ, because guys don't have to be worried about pregnancy. All they worry is about diseases, while girls have to worry about pregnancy as well, but boys don't agree. Participants also think that HIV/AIDS is a big risk for young people, because it is a lethal disease and because of the lack of health institutions in our

country. Also it is a risk because some people don't have enough information about the disease and they are not aware that it is lethal. They disagreed about the issue if the young girls are more worried about pregnancy or SST's. Some of them said that they are worried about pregnancy more, while others said that they are worried more about AIDS because AIDS is lethal. They think that most of the young people take it seriously, especially those who have information.

*If one has sex with a female who has had sex with more partners before, there is a risk from that relation. (Male, 16 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*I think that if I have sex with a girl who has had sex with many males before me, then it might be that she has AIDS and I can get infected with this disease. (Male, 16 years old, REA FGD)*

*If you are not careful and loose control, you may leave a girl pregnant. Then her parents will come and bring her to your place. (Male, 17 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*In urban places, normally, in rural places, there might be places in which they are not informed I think. (Female, 18 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*HIV/AIDS is a big risk for young people, because in our country there are not too many health institutions for preventing and curing AIDS. (Female, 17 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*Those who are well informed and know the risks, take the risk seriously, but those who think that maybe it's not as tragic as media and other institutions are making it, do not take it as seriously, they may even have AIDS, but they don't know they have it. (Female, 17 years old, Albanian FGD)*

## **Risk Prevention**

Participants have expressed the need for more knowledge about the risk prevention factors against STD. Some of them mentioned abstinence as a risk prevention measure, whereas others mainly mentioned use of condoms. The girls also think that if they keep their personal hygiene, if they go to visit physicians, gynecologists to see if they are pregnant, or if they have any disease, if they have less sexual intercourse or abstinence from sexual intercourse, are some of the ways to protect yourself from risks.

*"I have little information about protection. I only know that we can protect ourselves by using condoms. (Male, 18 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*"I am not at risk of getting AIDS because I didn't have sex with a person that had this disease. I was also always wearing a protection. (Male, 18 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*“I don’t feel I am at risk to get AIDS because I don’t have sexual intercourse, neither have I taken drugs. (Male, 17 years old, REA FGD)*

*Not to have sex is the best way to protect yourself from these risks. (Female, 17 years old, Albanian FGD)*

## **Condoms**

Safe sex would not include only the use of condoms. The girls think that there is no safe sex for young people. Those who have more experience or who are married might have safe sex. Young people who didn’t have sexual intercourse make fun of condoms, while those who are sexually active look at them as a prevention method. They think that the advantages of using condoms is the protection, while the disadvantages include a lower level of pleasure when using a condom during a sexual intercourse.

*Safe sex is when people who have sexual intercourse take care, they use condoms. (Female, 20 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*I wouldn’t say that if you use a condom, it would be a safe sex, because the condom might be damaged. (Female, 17 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*“Condoms are not so safe. I use them when I have sex with other females, and also when I have sex with my wife. Although I have used a condom, my wife got pregnant. I noticed that the condom was broken after I finished the intercourse.” (Male, 21 years old, REA FGD)*

*“I always use condoms when I have sex. It’s rather safe to use a condom. Although the pleasure it is not the same... (Male, 18 years old, Albanian FGD)*

The girls are usually the ones who insist in the use of condoms, and sometimes some boys try to avoid using them. But they think that both of them should be responsible. Also female participants think that when a person knows and trusts the person they are having sex with, they can avoid using the condoms. But boys do not think that way except REA participants saying they do not need to use protection because they rarely have pre marriage sex.

*I don’t have frequent sex and every time I do have sex, I am always prepared: I have a condom with me. I consider condoms to be safe, and that’s why I don’t feel at risk of getting AIDS or being at any risk from sex. (Male, 19 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*I believe that I will not have sex before marriage, and when I get married then I would not need a condom. (Male, 18 years old, REA FGD)*

Also participants think that most of the people use condoms. They think that in some cases the partners feel free to talk about condoms, but not in all the cases. They think that obtaining condoms is very easily, you have them everywhere, but young people feel more comfortable in buying them in pharmacies.

*Like candies, like condoms, it's easy, everywhere you go you can buy them.  
(Female, 20 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*If I would want to buy a condom, than I would go to a pharmacy shop... I might be a little embarrassed. I would probably send someone younger to buy it for me.  
(Male, 16 years old, REA FGD)*

*I get condoms at the local pharmacy store. (Male, 18 years old, Albanian FGD)*

Participants don't have information about other techniques for safe sex.

*As for the risk prevention measures, I only know about condoms. (Male, 16 years old, Albanian FGD)*

### **First penetrative intercourse**

Only two IDIs participants were sexually active. Both of them are Serbs and although they said they have been sexually active they did not want to discuss it. Based on available information it is obvious that one of them had first intercourse while she was a teenager (18 years old) because she was in love with her partner and believed that was a serious relationship. She made decision on her own without any pressure.

*Well, I wouldn't like to talk about it. (Female, IDI 10)*

*I wouldn't like to talk about it. (female, IDI 9)*

*I was in love at that time, and our relationship was going in that direction. (female, IDI 9)*

One of speakers said she has used contraception during her first intercourse but she refused to say which one. She only explains that she has discussed it with her partner, she was not under pressure to use/not use contraception and decision was made mutually.

*Both of us (were leading the conversation) about contraception. (female, IDI 9)*

Another speaker says she is informed with contraceptive methods but she did not use any during her first intercourse. She thinks there was no pressure not to use contraception.

*I know a lot about contraception methods, but I haven't used any of them. (Female, IDI 10)*

### **Subsequent sexual behaviour**

Both girls have been having only one partner in the last 12 months. One of them is the same partner a girl had first intercourse with. They both do not use any contraceptive against unwanted pregnancy or protection against sexually transmitted diseases. As they know their partners well they believe they are not at risk to gain STD. They have never had any symptoms pointing to disease. Neither them nor their partners have never had HIV test (they think they do not need one but also emphasizing it is not available) and believe they are not at risk to gain AIDS.

*It is not possible for us to make an HIV test. (Female, IDI 10)*

### **Reasons for sexual inexperience**

Reasons REA girls have not been sexually active yet are mutually connected. The main cause is cultural environment they live in. Namely, one of values assumes that girls should get married 'clean' (virgins) and basically all of them have been raised in accordance with it. They believe any contrary action would ashamed them and their families and that is one of the reasons they do not wish to have pre marriage sexual intercourse.

*I never had sexual intercourse. It's not common for us, Roma girls to have sexual intercourse before marriage. I don't have any other personal reason why I didn't have yet sexual relationships, it's just because I don't want to do it until I get married. My mother tells me that I shouldn't have sex until then. (female, 18 years old, Roma, uneducated, unemployed)*

*But if you're clever you are not going to do that thing, you're going to save your parents honor. (female, 17 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

There is belief that girls who had pre marriage sexual intercourse, if found out, will not get married at all or will not have a choice but to accept any potential future husband. If that is not found out before marriage they will experience problems in marriage itself.

*I never had sexual intercourse because I didn't want to. There was a guy who wanted to have sex with me, but I didn't want to do it, because I was worried about my future, if I already had sex. I told him that if you are planning to get married to me, yes I will have sex with you, otherwise I won't do it until then. (female, 19 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

*... it will be easier for me to find a better husband if I didn't have many partners before. (female, 15 years old, Roma, three years of elementary education, unemployed)*

*I have talked to my friends about sex, because many of them had tried it before they got married, and they denied it to their husbands, so they got beaten because of that. (female, 17 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

Besides there is a fear of punishment if social norms are broken. That also keeps girls away from sexual activities. Primarily that is fear of male family members. It is assumed they would fulfill their obligation and punish girls in order to decrease ‘shame’ she has put family through. Expected punishments are a ban to leave the house, physical violence and even expel from family (house).

*I couldn't do anything with the guy I was, because I was afraid that my brothers would see me, or that they would somehow find out. If they'd found out they'd probably beat me up, or lock me in the house and I wouldn't go out anymore, at least for a while. That's why I didn't have anything with him, but I only accepted him as a special friend, and was with him closer. We played together, sometimes we did touch and kiss. But that was all. He didn't attempt anything more, but even if he did, I wouldn't do it because of my family. (female, 15 years old, Roma, three years of elementary education, unemployed)*

*My father told me, if I see you with a guy, I'm going to kill you. It's better if you kill yourself, than to wait for me to come and kill you. And I am scared. And I wouldn't like to do such things. Well maybe if it wasn't for my father and the other things I would do it. By other things I mean the difficulty of getting married if I already had sex with another boy. (female, 15 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

Lack of information (and misinformation) on these issues cause fears that are of the reasons some girls avoid pre marriage sexual intercourse.

*And sex is not good because you don't feel good. After you start that you don't think anymore about your parents or about jobs around the house, all you think about is how to have sex, how to go faster and do it with him, how to feel some pleasure. (female, 17 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

*Because from sex people got many diseases, they got AIDS, because they had sex with a person, and they liked it, and then they had sex with other persons as well, and at the end they ended up sick in their beds. (female, 17 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

Some REA speakers and most of Serb girls believe they are too young and accordingly immature for sexual intercourse and that is one of the reasons for sexual abstinence. Those who believe to be ready for it are guided with their age and wish for sex.

*It is because I don't feel ready yet and that I am not mature enough for those things. The best time for me would be to wait until I become around 20 years old. (female, 16 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

*I'm not ready for a sexual relationship, because it is not something that I want for the time being. ... Maybe when I become a little older, and when I can think better about everything. ((female, IDI 7))*

*I feel like I am prepared now, maybe not for sex, but at least for going out with guys, but if I do that I will get in trouble with my family. (female, 15 years old, Roma, three years of elementary education, unemployed)*

*I want to get married as soon as possible, because I want to have sex. It can be with my current boyfriend, or maybe somebody else, I don't care. ... I already feel ready for those things, because I am sixteen years old. I feel bad because I am not allowed to do these things. (female, 15 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

Girls who stated to wait for the right person to have sex with have not tried to find a proper partner because they assume it is too early for them to have this kind of relationship. A girl said she is insecure in her wishes, while another said that general community attitude towards pre marriage sex affects her decision.

*Insecurity and, I don't know, I am waiting the right person and the right time. (female, IDI 8)*

*I haven't found the right guy yet. And, also because of the mentality here being the way it is. (female, IDI 7)*

First sexual intercourse plans are related to the first night in marriage i.e. relation with boyfriend they know they will married to. Most of girls say they would commence sex knowing their relationship will end with marriage. In that case they would not have to wait to get married and since the marriage is ensured they would have sex with their future husbands.

*My family also tells me that I should wait until I am older or until I get married as well. I could do it and keep it secret from my family, but I will wait a little bit longer for that. It would be different if I was in a serious relationship and if I knew that this is the man that I am going to marry, I would do it with him. But I wouldn't do it with just anybody. (female, 16 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

*If my boyfriend came to my house and told my father that he liked his daughter and that he is thinking seriously about their relationship, and that he wants to get married with me, then I wouldn't have problems with my father, I could even have sex. (female, 15 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

*It's not that I don't want to have sex, it's just that it has to be with the right partner, with a guy that has serious intentions. Until I don't find the right partner, a guy that proposes me marriage, I will only kiss with guys, and I won't engage in sexual intercourse with them. (female, 19 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

Pressure for not having sex before marriage is present in many ways. Sometimes indirectly (as well known community attitude), while in some situations starts with verbal persuade and may end with physical violence threats within the family.

*And there isn't kind of pressure not to have sex. It is generally known that it wouldn't be a good thing, but I didn't have any kind of direct pressure not to have sex. (female, 16 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

*My family members are the only ones who put me under pressure not to have boyfriends. I have to keep it secret from the community, but because I am afraid that they will talk to my family, but directly, my family is the only one that is pressuring me. They keep saying to me, my mother mostly that I shouldn't do anything bad with boys, and this is how they put pressure on me mostly, only with words. And my brothers as well say to me not to talk to boys, or do something with them. But if I did something and they found out, maybe my brothers would even use physical force against me. (female, 15 years old, Roma, three years of elementary education, unemployed)*

*Also I am afraid of my brothers because they told me to have boyfriends, but only as long as I don't have sex with me. They told me to allow them to touch me only in the upper part of the body. If I had sex probably they would beat me up. My father told me that he would kill me. Well actually, probably he wouldn't kill me, but he would either beat me up or throw me out of the house. (female, 15 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

Girls who had or have relationships experienced certain pressure from boyfriends for sexual activities and some of them say that girls of their age who have already had sex also put pressure on them to do the same. However, they have all managed to stick to their attitude of being to young for sex or wishing to have sex only with their husbands.

*I was in a relationship with a guy, but I didn't have sex with him. He asked me to, but I replied that I can't have sex because I am still young, and he understood that and didn't put anymore pressure on me. He asked me from time to time, but I kept saying no. (female, 16 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

*My boyfriend would like to have more with me, he sometimes even tries, but I just remind him that if he wants to do those kinds of things, he has to pay a visit to my father first. (female, 15 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

*He insisted and continued telling me how he wanted to have sex with me, and how it would be a good experience for me, but I kept telling him my conditions, which was only if he promised to marry me. But he didn't, so I didn't have sex with him. (female, 19 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

*Many people tell me that I should have sex, friends mostly, and they tell me how after sex my whole body will get cleaner, I will have pleasure, and you will feel better, and your brain will function better, and many people have tried to persuade*

*me, but they weren't successful because I told them that I will have sex only with my husband. (female, 17 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

*Some of my friends already had sex, and they tell me how it is a wonderful thing to do, and that I should do it as well. Sometimes I feel under some kind of pressure because of this, because I would like to feel free as my friends do, and do the same things as they do, but my father is stricter than their fathers, and that's why I don't do it. (female, 15 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

Kisses and touches are mostly used to please the partner. A girl says she was ready to accept him having sexual intercourse with other girls until they get married.

*But I told him that if he wanted to have sex he can go with other girls, girls from Belgrade or Prishtina, and I would still be together with him, but I won't do it until we get married. But he told me that he is capable of waiting not two years, but three or four to do it with me. (female, 17 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

*Instead of having sex we kissed and touched each other, and that was all we did. (female, 16 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

### **3.3. Use of sexual and reproductive health services**

#### **Personal usege of S/ RH services**

REA girls who have visited services where they received information on intercourse, contraception, sexually transmitted diseases, sex, etc. mostly visited centers that existed in their towns, which organized lectures and group sessions on different subjects. They visited center many times during few months while it was open.

*More information about relationships, sex, STI's, preservatives and similar things I have received in the Centre, which is a place in the village in which women from the village gather sometimes. ... I have visited this centre very often, continuously for two to three months. (female, 16 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

*I have visited the Centre here in Fushë Kosovë where some women gave us information about pregnancy, sexual relationships and similar topics. I went there a lot, because earlier I have heard talks from my friends and other people about sex and relationships, but I felt like I needed more information and that they would be useful for me. (female, 19 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

*I have been only once to such a center, but I gather frequently with my friends and we discuss such issues. I ask them things about sex because I am inexperienced, and they tell me that it's a great pleasure. (female, 17 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

One of girls says she visited a house where lectures for young people were organized. She felt more comfortable and safer in the house because the age of visitors and trainers were adjusted.

*I have been in a house, together with some other young girls, and there were some trained young girls who taught us different things about drugs, alcohol, and other issues that have to do with younger population, but they also talked about relationships, sex, condoms etc. I liked these visits very much and I felt very comfortable because we were all young girls and we were taught by young girls, who had receives some kind of training, and I learned many interesting things from them. I have been to this service for two or three months as well. (female, 16 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

She also visited another center that provided hygienic products besides information and she was satisfied with it.

*Also I have visited another centre in which women from some organizations brought us different hygienic products, and also gave us advice about relationships and protection against pregnancy and similar topics. (female, 16 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

As they have not been informed about services centers provide, most of girls paid a visit to find out what is it all about and learn something new if possible. As they introduced to the subjects they kept visiting center because they believed they do not know enough about those issues they will need and will benefit of and can not learn about elsewhere. Those girls who were there once recommended the center to their friends and invited them to go together.

*Every time I went there it was for the same reason, to learn more about the things that I was interested, but didn't have reliable persons to talk to. (female, 19 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

*The reason why I went there was to learn new things about which I thought that I should be aware of, and to talk about the things I didn't feel free to talk in my home with my family members. (female, 16 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

*Also another reason why I went there were the things that these people from different organizations brought, like food, detergents etc. (female, 19 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

*I was in Presheve to such a service and they asked us many questions about sexuality. I went there because somebody else had written my name on the list, because I was just a guest there. I liked many things that they taught us there. (female, 17 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

Girls would not visit such institution due to fear of community reaction regardless availability of service. Their movements are limited (they always have to inform family members where they go and why they go) and they are afraid their family will find such a place inappropriate

once they hear what subjects are discussed within the institution. There is a thought that girls who visit centers will not be appreciated (they will be considered as immoral).

*I don't know if I would feel free to go to such a service, because of my family, even though I would like to go there. I am not free to move around very much, because they are always interested about where I was, whom did I talk to, why I have been to certain places, they keep me under control. In order to go there, I have to tell them, and I am afraid that if I tell them what we were talking there about, they won't let me go. (female, 15 years old, Roma, three years of elementary education, unemployed)*

*My brothers would think that I don't need any such services and they would think that they are teaching me bad things, that's why they wouldn't let me go. But I would really like to learn about those things, because I am interested in knowing more. (female, 15 years old, Roma, three years of elementary education, unemployed)*

*I have never been to any kind of service for any kind of advice regarding sexual relationships or things like these. I didn't go because I didn't want to. I know that there were offered such things here in the village earlier, but I wasn't here at that time, I was at my grandmothers house. And there wasn't any kind of center that provided such services. But even if there were I wouldn't go, because it wouldn't be appropriate. (female, 18 years old, Roma, uneducated, unemployed)*

Even those girls stating they would not visit such institution believing they do not belong there later on agree to go and learn things they are not familiar with only if they would be sure their families would have never find it out.

*If it wasn't for this shame from my family I would go. Like for example if such services were provided in the village where my grandmother lives I would go, because with her I don't have any problems, I can go out whenever I want and I don't have to tell her where I've been, but here it's different, because my family would ask me about what we did in the meeting, what did we talk about. And I would be ashamed to tell them about what we talked in the meeting. (female, 18 years old, Roma, uneducated, unemployed)*

*If there was such a service here in the village I wouldn't go because I would feel embarrassed, not because of my neighbors, but I would feel embarrassed to tell my mother and my father where I was going. And if I didn't feel ashamed to ask them to go to such a place, I would go with my friends. (female, 15 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

*I would like to go to a place and learn about pregnancy, condoms etc. I don't know anything about these issues because there was never anybody to teach me, but I would like to go to a place and learn. (female, 15 years old, Roma, three years of elementary education, unemployed)*

However, some of them have wrong perception of what they might get in the institution. Obviously, girls who have not visited centers yet consider these institutions as places where ‘training’ for sexual intercourses is offered, all in accordance with public opinion in their communities.

*I would like them to teach me how to have sex, to tell me if the sexual intercourse is interesting, or if it is not interesting, if it is a good thing to have sex, because the girls here talk all the time how it is a great pleasure to have sex... Also I would like it if they gave us different magazines and movies about love and sex, I would like to learn more by watching movies. (female, 15 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

A girl’s friends visited center and apart of learning a lot they transmitted some of new knowledge to her. They explained also that is very comfortable in the center, therefore that should not be taken as an excuse not to visit it.

*There were some girls I know who went there, and a cousin of mine, but I didn’t go. They told me many times that I should go to such services. They said that this was a great experience for them. They told me the things that they have learned in the Center. They have taught me some things about pregnancy and how to avoid pregnancy, about condoms and how you should use them and about things like these, things that they had learned in the center. All the things I know, is what my friends have told me. (female, 18 years old, Roma, uneducated, unemployed)*

Most of Serb girls have never been to any of institutions of this type. One of them uses to go to JEZAS every day during two months, when she was an eight grade (three years ago). She spent time with children of her age in order to gain information they did not possess. Atmosphere was very relaxed, she was not nervous or scared. She does not see any reason why young people should be afraid their visits will become public. She recommended this sort of gathering information.

*For awareness, to get better information. ... We received a very warm acceptance. They were kind, they answered all my questions and my friends as well that were present. ... I was not worried about someone else finding out about visit to this institution, Not really. I don’t think that is something awful. (female, IDI 8)*

## **Personal experience**

REA girls stated they felt uncomfortable on the first visit because discussed subjects are usually not discussed in their community. They felt nervous and could not relax. As atmosphere was very positive and without any pressure they become more relaxed on the following visits and at the end they actively participated in activities.

*In the first visit I felt very nervous because we were talking about intimate things, and I wasn’t used to hear other people talk or personally talk openly about these*

*things, but as time went by I started feeling more comfortable and I could talk about my experiences in front of other girls and in front of the advisors. (female, 16 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

But it was also said they felt uncomfortable later on which was caused by male trainer, since they are raised not to talk about ‘intimate’ and ‘female’ subjects with a person of opposite sex.

*There was one time later on when I didn’t feel comfortable in the meeting because the information was given from a male, and none of the girls felt comfortable revealing their personal issues with a man, and also, we were ashamed when we heard those things from a man. (female, 16 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

Girls who have already visited center were afraid of community reactions but they still went there.

*Also I was afraid that some people might found out that I was visiting the centre. I didn’t care about the girls because they visited the centre as well, and my mother knew also that I was going but I was more afraid that my father, or other male in my family would found out, or in general people from the village, because they would misunderstand the reason why we went to those meetings. (female, 16 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

*I think that all the girls from the village are interested to attend such meetings, but they feel ashamed or frightened to go, because they can’t explain to their family members where and for what are they going. (female, 16 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

### **Posljednji poset ustanovi**

All REA girls who visited center or similar institutions use to go there while it worked and offered interesting contents. After the program was implemented they had no choice but would go again to such a center if opened again. They would recommend others to go too.

*I haven’t visited any services lately, the last time was three or four months ago, because they were finished and aren’t offered right now, and not because I didn’t want to go. The last time I have visited such a service was the Centre and it was a usual meeting in which the information were given from a woman from the village. The reason why I went to this meeting was the same as the other times, because I was curious. (female, 16 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

*In this last visit, as opposed to the ones I have been before, I didn’t feel very comfortable, because the person who was teaching us was a man. If it was a woman, like it was the other times, I would feel more open and ready to talk, but because it was a man I was embarrassed all the time while I was there. But no in*

*general I have felt v very good during these meetings and it's because they stopped, otherwise I would go there again. (female, 19 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

Experience REA girls have show that fears and community prejudices once overcome will bring them to the centers they will continue to visit as long as programs last, due to information they receive there, feeling they are accepted and nice atmosphere

*I am very satisfied with what they have offered for us and I think that they have provided me with everything that I needed. People who offered the information were always very friendly, the people we didn't know, and also the older woman from the village. If they were organized again, I would go there once more. (female, 19 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

None of REA girls visited institution that exist independently from programs specially designed to their population. They are not able to comment their availability, time when lectures take place and type of provided services. Serb girls think that existing institutions are not available enough, there are no enough institutions in general, they are not adjusted to serve the needs of young people and are not organized properly.

*I think that the situation is not satisfactory. (female, IDI 9)*

*But there are no such institutions in our community, therefore we have to adjust to what we have. (female, IDI 7)*

*Because, in our institutions, there is no such thing like a youth center where you could get better information about it. 10*

### **Opinions and views about services based on experience of use**

FGDs respondents held a very positive view about these services, and they think that they lack such services in their community, and that more should be done, especially in schools, because they think that the young people need more information. IDIs girls we have talked to were not able to make judgment about offered services to young people because basically they do not exist. Obviously need is huge because lack of information and prejudices guide them in creating opinions especially related to reproductive and sexual health.

*I would be very much interested to have a centre where we would find information about sex health. I know this information would be beneficial for me, they are all for my own good... I know I am young to worry about these things, but I would want to go to such a centre to learn new things. I have talked to my friends, and we all agree that we lack information about sexual health. (Male, 17 years old, REA FGD)*

*I don't have any impression, because there are no such institutions here to provide help for the youth. (female, IDI 7)*

*If such services were provided again I would go there to learn more. It would be good if the other girls went there and hear these things. It would be good if these advices were given to schoolgirls, because after school they do terrible things with guys, and that's the reason why I have stopped my sister from going to school. I have told many persons, many times to go to such a service and learn more about sex. The girls who already had sex wouldn't come, because it wouldn't be interesting for them anymore, but those who didn't would. (female, 17 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

### **Ideas about how S /RH services can be improved**

FGDs respondents thought that telling people that you are going to give them advice, or going to schools when they have classes where all the children are present would be the best way to include all the young people. IDIs girls basically think that young people would visit institutions if they would exist in their towns.

*Youth is going through some very critical period. I think that intervention is necessary, as there is still time to intervene. As for a centre, I believe hat about half of the youth would be interested to go to such centres and get information. However, such things are very necessary, and we have to have them. (Male, 19 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*"If it would be organized between classes in school, there would be more people to listen to the information that is given and the effect would be bigger. (Male, 17 years old, REA FGD)*

*Young people that attend such centres could explain to their friends the knowledge they gain at these centres. (Male, 16 years old, Albanian FGD)*

FGD participants believe that services provided for boys and girls should be the same, but IDI participants emphasize that is better to have separate programs for boys and girls, not because they have different needs, but in order to make participants feel more comfortable and relaxed while spending time in institution. Namely, they think that conversation about these subjects is huge step forward and may be jeopardized if there would be pressure for mutual participation.

*I think that the services should be the same for both, because the consequences are the same for girls and the boys. The same advice should be given to both girls and boys. (Female, 16 years old, Albanian FGD)*

*Also they shouldn't be in the same place for girls and boys, because we talk about different things. Even if we talk about the same things, it's just not appropriate if we were together. (female, 18 years old, Roma, uneducated, unemployed)*

*These services should be separated for males and females, not only because we have different needs, but also because we can't talk freely in front of boys. I think that boys also need some kind of information, but it shouldn't be given to them in the same place with women. (female, 16 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

*I would go only if we were all girls over there, and not mixed up with boys. Boys need this kind of advice too, but they should be given in separate places for them. (female, 15 years old, Roma, three years of elementary education, unemployed)*

*Services should be offered for both parties, but separated from each other. While girls need more information about how to handle guys, things about pregnancy, guys need to know about different things that are distinctive for them. Also there are differences in the things girls need, like hygienic things for the menstrual period. I think that girls need more services because it's easier for guys, they can talk more freely to their friends and to the other people from the community, and girls don't have much things to do, so it would be more fun for them. (female, 19 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

*I think that the services should be the same for both, because the consequences are the same for girls and the boys. The same advice should be given to both girls and boys. (Female, 16 years old, Albanian FGD)*

FGDs respondents thought that in media there should be more programs about these issues. School would be the best place to offer such services. Also media would be a good way because it would include general population. Or a separate place which would be especially prepared for such services would be a good place.

*Best way is to get information in school. However, we also might have any magazine, where it would be explained all things related to risks that can come from sex. (Male, 17 years old, Albanian FGD)*

Most of girls say that this type of institutions should be located in their towns but do not have further ideas for precise location. Persons of same sex should provide advices and information. Some speakers emphasized an advantage of peer education.

FGDs respondents thought a person who is competent, who has enough information about these issues, older, serious and who has experience should be the one to provide such services.

*It would be better if it was here in the village, and if they taught us about pregnancy, in hospitals, everything. (female, 15 years old, Roma, three years of elementary education, unemployed)*

*And women should be the ones that give the information, because I don't feel comfortable to discuss things with men. It doesn't matter if the women are from the village, someone we know, or someone we don't know, as long as they give us information. (female, 19 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

*It would be better if the information would be given from an older woman that is from this village, because it's better if we know her. She should know what things are more important for us to know and give us more information about these issues. (female, 18 years old, Roma, uneducated, unemployed)*

*It's harder to talk with older people or with men about these issues. (female, 18 years old, Roma, uneducated, unemployed)*

*I don't know what to say about location, but it's better if young girls provide the services because I feel more comfortable when I talk with peers who are trained to talk about these issue. (female, 16 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

*Also peer education would be helpful, as we could transmit information we learn at school to other children who do not attend school. (Male, 17 years old, REA FGD)*

*It should mostly be doctors, and other experts in this field. (female, IDI 10)*

Most of respondent thought that using media, including here TV, newspapers, radios, internet, brochures, in café bars would be the best way to promote such services, but REA girls find advertising and promotion of services problematic. The main obstacle for them on visiting institutions is fear that somebody will find out it, therefore they do not support the idea to promote centers. So most of them think that they need to "mask" their counseling services with expressions that are more socially acceptable, regarding topics that they could cover-health issues, development of personal hygiene, counseling regarding behaviour towards opposite sex and preparations for the marriage, etc.

*The best way would be to advertise it through TV, radio and at schools. (female, IDI 7)*

*If you came to my house and told my parents that you are talking me to a place, maybe they will let me go. Or you can lie to them that you are taking me to teach me how to use computers, or some kind of school and there would be no problem. (female, 15 years old, Ashkali, uneducated, unemployed)*

*Other things should be included in the services, because if all they give is suggestions about sexual relationships, i will have problems with my family i would have problems going there. So if there was something else, i would tell them that this is the reason why i am going, and not just talks about sexual relationships. (female, 18 years old, Roma, uneducated, unemployed)*

Distribution of hygiene products is considered as good idea to attract beneficiaries. It could be used as a reason in front of family to come to center. It was also said that doctor, his/hers advices and possibility for medical check up would be an advantage.

*I don't know how they can be promoted but they can be improved if they gave us more detergents to keep cleanliness, and other sanitary materials. Also if they provided more information it would be better, and if we had a physician, to whom we could go for examinations and advice. These would be even better. (female, 19 years old, Roma, elementary education, unemployed)*

## 4. Conclusions

It is obvious that young people do not possess enough knowledge about reproductive and sexual health although they stated there are many speakers they can talk to about these subjects. Speakers themselves and information they provide lack reliability and precision. Knowledge young people have is result of ‘general knowledge’, information based on other people’s experience, facts transferred from generation to generation. There are no systematic, ‘sorted’, modern information which have science grounds and have been received from reliable source.

As institutions that could provide professional information to young people do not exist or are not available, speakers chosen to discuss issues related to reproductive and sexual health are those who are emotionally and age close to young people. They believe that close relationship is the key pre condition to have an open conversation about sex issues, believe that speakers are well intentioned and possess certain knowledge based on personal experience.

Therefore, it is necessary to make information about reproductive and sexual topics available and provide reliable source that will guarantee its reliability. Young people should not be in position to search for information and receive unreliable, old, half true and/or contradictory data based mostly on personal experience of persons they know or their friends know.

Thus, the idea to visit institutions where young people will learn more about these subjects is well accepted. Previous experience shows that ‘informal institutions’ (counseling services, centers for young people, etc.) are better accepted then classical health institutions, so further activities should be addressed to it. Media campaign and information spread in schools could help to break prejudices young people have about this sort of institutions and help to improve visits in a greater number.

## 5. Appendices

IDI Guide: Sexual and Reproductive “Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviour and Practices” research report for youth target groups

*Section 1. Social support and connectedness with family/community/friends.*

### **Parents, family and community members**

- How able are you to discuss matters related with relationships and sex with one or both of your parents?

Who usually initiate discussion?

What do you discuss?

What do you feel you can not discuss?

- What about other members of your family or community? Brothers/sisters, grandparents, etc
- How much do you value the information and opinions you receive from your parents/family/community members?
- Does this information affect the way you behave?
- Why/why not?

- How important are parents/other members of your family/community as sources of information and support for you?

### **The role of friends**

- How important have your friends been in helping you find out about relationships and sex?

- What issues do you talk about?

- How do you talk about things? Seriously/ as a joke/ one to one/ in groups/showing off, etc

- How do you feel about the information you have received from your friends?

What issues you can't talk about?

-How much do you value the information and opinions you receive from your parents/family/community members?

-Does this information affect the way you behave?

-Why/why not?

## *Section 2. Sexual behaviour and risk*

*(For respondents who have had sexual intercourse)*

### **Detailed description of first penetrative intercourse**

- Can you describe your first experience of penetrative intercourse?
- How old were you and your partner?
  - How did you feel about the relationship?
- How would you describe it?
- What feelings did you have for your partner?
- Why did you decide to engage in first intercourse with the partner you did?
- What was your/their motivation for having sex?
- Did you feel pressurised into having first sex? By whom? How did they apply pressure?

### **Use of contraception during first intercourse**

- Did you use any method of contraception?

### **Contraception used**

- Which method did you use?
- Why did you use this method?
- Was there pressure to use contraception?

### **Contraception not used**

- Were there any reasons why contraception wasn't used? What?
- Was there pressure not to use contraception?
- How was the contraceptive usage/ non –use decided?
- Did you find it easy to discuss this issue with your partner?
- Who led the discussion?

- Did you try and influence the way things happened? How? Were you successful?

### **Reflections of first sexual intercourse**

- How important was sex to you at that age?

-Do you feel that the speed of your sexual development was controlled by you?

-Were other people more in control of the pace of your sexual development? Whom?

-In what ways do you feel that you did (or did not) control the pace of development?

- Did you experience any forms of pressure to have sex?

- Pressure from whom? How? What did you do about it? How did you feel about it?

### **Subsequent sexual behaviour**

- Thinking now about the time since you became sexually active: Have you had more than one sexual partner?

- How many sexual partners in the last 12 months?

- Which forms of protection against pregnancy and STIs do you generally use?

-With what proportion of partners have you always/sometimes/ never used condoms?

-Who generally provides it/them?

- Why do you use them? In what instances have you not used them? How do you decide when and when not to use them?

-From where do you typically obtain your protection? Are there any barriers to obtaining protection? What? How are they overcome?

-Have you found it easy to discuss the issue of contraception/protection with your partners? In what instances has it been difficult?

### **Use of protection with current, most recent etc. sexual partner**

- What risks did/do you feel you are at with your most recent partner? Why?

-Were/have any risks (been) considered or discussed? What risks?

-Did you find it easy to discuss the issue of protection with partner X? Who led the discussion?

- Did/do you use any method to protect yourselves against pregnancy and/or STIs?

- Was/is there pressure to use protection? Not to use protection? By whom?

### **Sexual risk taking**

- To what extent do you think about any risks involved with sex?

-What action do you take in relation to these risks?

-Have you had a STI or symptom? Have any of your partners had a STI or symptom? What happened? What did you do? How did you feel? Has it changed your behaviour?

- Are you fearful of pregnancy?

- Have you ever been pregnant?

- How would you feel if you found out you were pregnant? What would you do? Why?

-Do you consider yourself to be at risk of catching HIV or any other sexually transmitted disease? Why? Why not?

-Have you ever had an HIV test? Have any of your partners had an HIV test? Why? Why not?

-Have you ever asked a partner to have a test?

*(For respondents who have never had sexual intercourse)*

### **Sexual inexperience**

-Why do you think you haven't had sex yet?

-Reason(s) why first intercourse has yet to occur.

-Do you feel ready? Why? Why not?

-Have you wanted to but not yet found the right partner? How do you go about selecting the right partner? What does the relationship have to be like?

-When will the time be right for you?

-Have you plans or expectations to engage in sex?

- Do you feel under pressure not to have sex?

- From whom? How does this make you feel?

- Have you ever felt any pressure(s) to experience first intercourse?

- How have you resisted the pressure(s) to have sex?
- Do you use other techniques to please partner(s)?

### *Section 3. Use of sexual and reproductive health services*

#### **Personal usage**

- Have you ever been to any services for help and advice about relationships, contraception, STIs, sex etc?

#### *If have been*

- How many times have you been? (to each one)
- What for?

#### *If haven't been*

- Is there any reason(s) why you haven't been along?
- Would you consider going to any of the services? Why/why not?
  
- Has anyone you know been to any services? Do you know about their experiences? Can you describe them?

#### **Personal experience of services**

- Can you remember which was the very first place you went to?
- What was your first experience like?
- How did the visit go? Were you scared/nervous? How were you treated? Were you satisfied with the visit? Why/why not?
- What did you obtain on your first visit? Why did you go?
- Were you fearful of others finding out? Did anyone find out you had been who you didn't want to know?
- What made you go along for the very first time? What prompted you to go? Did anyone prompt you to go? Did you tell anybody about your visit? How did they react?
- Why did you decide to go to venue A? Why choose that service? Did friends recommend it? Was it advertised? How did you found out about where to go?
- Did you visit the service again? How have you found your subsequent visits?
- Have you recommended venue A to anyone?

#### **Last visit to a service**

- The very last time you visited a service where did you go?
- Can you describe your very last visit?
- How did your last visit go? How were you treated? How did you feel? What did you go for? Did you get what you wanted? Were you satisfied with the visit?
- What are your general feelings about the services you have accessed?
- Have the services you attended been welcoming, friendly, helpful, confidential etc.?
- Are the services, easy to get to, open at convenient times?
- Do they provide you with all the services you want/require?

### **Views about services**

- What are your general impressions of the services provided for young people?
- What do you think are the most important features of a sexual health service for young people? What do you think are the essential elements of a service?
- What will make young people go? Are there differences in the needs of young men and women? How can they both be provided for?
- Where do you think young people's sexual health services should be held (location)? Why? Who should provide the information and advice?
- What do you think are the best ways of advertising and promoting services?
- How do you think the services in your locality could be improved upon? What do young men/women in your area need? What do you need?

## FGD Guide: Sexual and Reproductive “Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviour and Practices” research report for youth target groups

### Focus Group Discussion Schedule

#### I. Talking About Sex with friends

##### For women:

Do young women of your age talk about sex with friends?

Do they talk about bodily changes, periods, the biology of sex/reproduction, pregnancy, relationships, love, marriage, when to have sex, how to do it, contraception, STI's, HIV etc.

Does this tend to be with male and/or female friends?

With one person or in groups?

How do women of your age talk about it?

joke, show off, serious, giggle, give advice, swap information etc.

Do you think it's the same for men of your age?

-How are they similar?

-How are they different?

-Do you think men talk about sex like women do?

##### For men:

Do young men of your age talk about sex with friends?

Does this tend to be with male and/or female friends?

With one person or in groups?

How do men of your age talk about it?

joke, show off, serious, giggle, give advice, swap information etc.

Do you think it's the same for women of your age?

- How are they similar?
- How are they different?
- Do you think men women about sex like men do?

## **II. Commencement of sexual activity**

Is it generally acceptable in your community for young people to have sexual relations when they are not married?

Do things vary for young men and women?

What proportion of young men/women of your age do you think are sexually active?

At what age would you say young people start having sex?

Feelings and reactions about young people's sexual activity amongst parents, elders and other relations, young people themselves.

What discussions/negotiations go on before sex takes place?

## **III. Reasons for having sex**

Why do you think women of your age have sex?

-What do you think they get out of it?

-What do you think it means to them?

Feelings about young people's sexual activity.

Does it affect how they feel about themselves (their self image)?

-Do young people get sexual experience in ways other than with someone they are dating?

-How?

-With whom?

-What proportions?

What do young people think about same sex (men with men or women with women) activities?

What do others think?

#### **IV. Pressure**

To what extent do you think that people of your age are pressured into sex?

To what extent do you think that people of your age are pressured into sex by their friends?

Sources of pressure: media influences, financial pressures/gains from intercourse.

Are there any differences in the pressures experienced by young men and women?

Are young men/ women able to avoid pressures?

Nature of sexual consent

Ways of avoidance

#### **V. Risk Taking**

What risks are there associated with sex?

To what extent do you think that young people are aware of them?

To what extent do you think that people of your age take risks of any sort during sex?

-Why do they take these risks?

Do men and women take the same or different risks?

To what extent do you think HIV/AIDS is a risk to young people of your age?

Are young people more worried/concerned about pregnancy or HIV/AIDS and other STI's?

Emotional risks, reputational risks, others

Do you think people take the risk of HIV/AIDS seriously? Why/why not?

#### **VI. Risk prevention**

How can young people be responsible for protecting against any risk during sex?

Pregnancy, STI, HIV/AIDS, Emotional risks, Reputational risks.

Who is normally responsible for contraception and protection in relationship?

What do people of your age think about contraception? Is it expected to be used?

How do young people feel talking about contraception with partners?

## **VII. Condoms**

What does safe sex mean to young people?

What do young people think about condoms?

- What are their advantages and disadvantages?

- Should men/women carry them around?

Where do young men and women generally obtain their condoms?

- Ease of obtaining condoms

- Barriers to obtaining condoms

- Places where young people would feel comfortable obtaining condoms.

- Other safe sex techniques

Some people would say that they would rather not have sex than use a condom...

- What do you think women/men of your age think about that?

- Differences between young men and women.

What do you think would make people of your age adopt “safer sex” practices?

## **VIII. Views about R/SH services**

What are your general impressions of the services provided for young people?

What do you think are the most important features of a sexual health service for young people?

What do you think are the essential elements of a service?

What will make young people go?

Are there differences in the needs of young men and women?

How can they both be provided for?

Where do you think young people's sexual health services should be held (location)? Why?

Who should provide the information and advice?

What do you think are the best ways of advertising and promoting services?

How do you think the services in your locality could be improved upon?

What do young men/women in your area need? What do you need?