

Sex and youth: contextual factors affecting risk for HIV/AIDS

A comparative analysis
of multi-site studies
in developing countries



Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNAIDS
UNICEF • UNDP • UNFPA • UNDCP
UNESCO • WHO • WORLD BANK

UNAIDS
Geneva, Switzerland
1999

UNAIDS BEST PRACTICE COLLECTION

Young people and risk-taking in sexual relations

Community responses to AIDS

Use of the female condom: genders relations and sexual negotiation

Young people and risk-taking in sexual relations

This set of studies presents a comparative analysis of data collected in interviews and discussions with nearly 3000 young people in 7 countries in Africa, Asia and the Americas. Strikingly similar themes and issues emerge, including concepts of youth, the challenge to traditional cultures, modernization and urbanization – revealing a complex and heterogeneous situation for young people and no one HIV/STD prevention strategy. Future prevention efforts must take into account the impact of dominant sexuality frameworks, the onset of sexual activity, the importance of the body for young people, mass media, risk assessment and safer sex.

Community responses to AIDS

A comparative analysis of the resulting data from 5 countries identified local beliefs about HIV/AIDS, the community and household responses and the inter-relationships between the two. Key factors influencing the responses include the existing economic situation, prevailing relations between men and women in the communities and households, local beliefs in health and health care and local levels of stigmatization. Recommendations are made for policy and programme development.

Use of the female condom: genders relations and sexual negotiation

This third set of studies first collected data in 4 countries on gender relations, sexual communication and negotiation followed by an intervention to strengthen women's capacity in these latter areas. The comparative analysis clearly identified economic dependence on men and gender stereotypes as the two major factors constraining women in their sexual behaviour. The report finishes with specific recommendations.

This bare summary of these 3 pioneering sets of studies investigations into the determinants of HIV-related vulnerability cannot convey the extraordinary wealth of data and the richness of experiences and feelings reported by the participants with striking frankness. The volume will be read and re-read by national authorities, programme designers and managers, researchers and intervention specialists. In addition it will be of great interest and value to all those who are interested in the issues surrounding young people and HIV/AIDS, sexual behaviour, communication and negotiation, the improvement and strengthening of responses for the benefit of people living with HIV/AIDS, their carers and their communities, gender roles and the options for women who want to protect themselves against HIV and other STDs as well as pregnancy.

Part 1

Young people and risk-taking in sexual relations

Gary Dowsett¹ and Peter Aggleton²

¹ Centre for the Study of Sexually Transmissible Diseases, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia

² Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London, UK

INTRODUCTION

Those attending any major international or national conference on HIV/AIDS cannot help but notice the concern about, and emphasis on, young people. The XI International Conference on AIDS in Vancouver saw abstracts for no less than 319 posters and papers about aspects of young people's risk of HIV infection, or responses to it. As a major sector in almost every country's population seen as at enhanced risk in this pandemic, young people are viewed as a 'problem' — a problem for prevention education, and a problem for potential HIV transmission.

This problem is captured by the very words so often used to describe young people — youth, youngsters, teenagers, juveniles, minors, adolescents. However, the term 'young people' is itself ambiguous. The term is often used to refer to those between the ages of 12 and 26, although in many cultures the upper level of this cohort should properly be regarded as fully mature adults. Were the age of onset of sexual activity to be used as a starting point for the lower limit, then we would have to recognize that in some parts of Africa about 40% of 15-year-old young men have experienced intercourse, whereas in some parts of south-east Asia, over 80% of 20 year-olds are virgins, still waiting to transform themselves from 'children' into 'young people' (Cleland & Ferry 1995). It is this difference between the cultural experiences and understandings of different groups of young people that makes direct comparisons between countries and cultures so difficult.

The category 'young people' is a recent one. Like its predecessors, the term attempts to distinguish between childhood and full adulthood, and historically the gap between these two has widened. In the West, and particularly since World War II, increased retention rates in secondary schooling and rising enrolments in postschool educational institutions have increased young people's dependency on their families, communities and the state. In contrast, more than half of all 14–16-year-olds (depending on the country) were likely to be in the workforce only a few generations ago, contributing to family incomes or working for family businesses, farms and/or in domestic labour in the home. This last point also highlights the fact that gender differences in relation to paid and unpaid work, and in relation to school retention and further workforce training, have changed rapidly in the West in the last 50 years.

In developing countries, ambiguity concerning young people is even more pronounced. The process of Westernization occurring in many developing countries brings with it new ideas, new influences and novel ways of understanding. It is important that Western concepts of young people, as an age cohort dependent on family, community and/or the state in an extended process of preparation for adult and productive life, are not applied uncritically to developing countries. It is important too that young people are not seen globally as some artificial homogeneity. This is especially important in the formulation of public health strategies to limit the effects of HIV. Local specificity in public health responses indicates a recognition that different epidemics of HIV

(and sexually transmissible diseases [STDs]) exist and that there is a need for cultural appropriateness.

It was the awareness, both of the widely acknowledged vulnerability of young people to HIV infection globally, and the need for better informed understandings of cultural differences and forms, that led to the development of the multi-site study described here. The title of the research programme — *Studies of contextual factors affecting risk-related sexual behaviour among young people in developing countries* — hereafter the Contextual Factors study, brings this concern with cross-cultural difference to the fore, and the seven research teams who carried out these studies successfully document such differences. Yet as we will see there are striking similarities too, the most apparent being the situation of young women when it comes to attempting to ‘negotiate’ sexual relations with men. The value, then, of this cross-cultural comparison lies both in its capacity to reveal differences and similarities, and in its ability to draw lessons and ideas from these seven countries that might apply elsewhere.

Existing research frameworks

Research on young people and HIV/AIDS has changed little throughout the pandemic. The global literature on this topic (which is reviewed briefly in Chapter 2) is familiar in two respects. First, a large number of surveys have been undertaken in many countries to examine young people’s knowledge, attitudes, practices and behaviours. These have usually been conducted among accessible populations of young people such as school or univer-

sity students. Second, there is a distinct absence of young people themselves in most research. Young people constitute a population most usually *researched upon*, a population seen as being ‘at-risk’, almost by definition. They are a group regarded in most societies as yet to become real persons, full citizens and to be accorded full human rights. They are a group whose behaviour, particularly sexual behaviour, is often regarded as premature if not immature, immoral or at least unfortunate, and whose own ideas, experiences and concerns about sexuality are mostly neglected by society at large.

The studies described here aim to contribute to new thinking about young people and sexual health. They demand that we grapple with the changing situation for young people in Cameroon, for example, as continuing urbanization radically transforms the rules for sexual conduct. They encourage a recognition that some middle-class young women in Costa Rica are competently handling significant changes in gender roles, while less affluent young men are struggling to maintain their sense of self through sexual success. They suggest we should take very seriously the fact that young women experience considerable coercion in sex in Papua New Guinea, yet these same women claim the right to physical sexual pleasure, following their Western counterparts, and distancing themselves from their mothers’ and grandmothers’ experiences and understandings of sex. And they encourage us to stop ignoring the same-sex pursuit of sexual pleasure reported by young people in every country in this study, thereby recognizing the very real diversity of sexual experience among young people across the world.

Health promotion successes in HIV prevention share certain common characteristics, and a central one of these is the notion of community inclusion in processes of intervention development and deployment. A key message from the seven countries that participated in this multi-site study is that young people themselves must be included in the development of health promotion programmes if prevention approaches are to be relevant. Young people's sexual conduct, the meanings they generate concerning sex, and the individual and shared investment they have in sexual exploration, pleasure and activity, must be represented in a plausible and respectful manner if we are to convince young people everywhere that HIV/AIDS is a real danger to them.

To achieve this accurate and fitting representation of young people's sexual conduct in health promotion material and programmes, it is important to know more than their specific sexual practices, the frequency of coitus, the age of sexual initiation, or the extent of sexual experimentation of various kinds. While this kind of information is important in gauging the size of the 'problem', rarely does it help us know *how* to educate, *what* curricula to use and *how* to teach.

It is in relation to those broader concerns that the studies reported here were intended to make their mark.

The material reported from each country is rich. Similar methodologies assured that certain issues were well covered by all seven studies, and these will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3. Differences in approach between countries, however, also enabled the studies to provide quite specific insights into young people's sexual culture in particular contexts. Although we cannot generalize these findings to all young people, they are valuable in helping us rethink notions of sexuality. They enable us to think about sexual expression as a set of meaningful acts, not just as a biological urge. In this way, sex can be seen as a deeply inscribed process of self-construction, pursued in the context of changing social expectations and often rapid economic change.

The report has been written for a wide range of people working on issues relating to young people and HIV/AIDS. It describes work initiated by the World Health Organization's former Global Programme on AIDS (WHO/GPA) and completed with the support of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

BACKGROUND

The Contextual Factors study was conceived of as a multi-site comparative study guided by a *General Research Protocol* that outlined the overall research questions, objectives and methodology.

Preliminary literature review

Before this *General Research Protocol* was developed, a literature review was commissioned to provide an up-to-date picture of young people's sexuality at that time, in relation to risks associated with HIV infection and AIDS.³ In this review, various methodological approaches to investigating young people's sexuality were discussed, and their comparative strengths assessed. Issues such as cultural appropriateness, flexibility in use, terminology, sequencing of questions and issues, implied values, and the divergence between medical/scientific and lay persons' understandings of HIV/AIDS were examined.

Four main theoretical frameworks regularly used in investigating young people's sexuality were identified: the individual differences approach; the behavioural modelling approach; the sexual 'scripts' and discourses approach; and structural explanations. The review concluded that, while each of these had particular strengths, the first generally

'contributed little to recent attempts to plan and introduce appropriate interventions to encourage risk-reducing behaviours'³. As for the others, the major weakness was their lack of, and need for, deeper understandings of social and cultural contexts as the basis for the development of perceived normative attitudes and behaviours.

In reviewing this literature on young people's sexuality, a number of emphases in existing social and behavioural research were identified. Much previous research had focused on:

- (1) measuring patterns of sexual behaviour (e.g., age at first intercourse; levels of sexual activity; experience of anal intercourse);
- (2) ascertaining the meanings of sexual activity for young people (e.g., familiarity with sexual partners before intercourse; characteristics of first sexual partner, such as age, level of experience; category of first sexual partners, such as sex work client, peer, spouse; reasons for, and reactions to, first sexual intercourse; reported condom use);
- (3) describing community understandings of sexual activity (e.g., generational differences; traditional values; understandings of sex work);
- (4) identifying reported sources of information about sex and HIV/AIDS (e.g., families; overseas influences; peer groups; schools; family planning programmes; mass media);

³ Ingham R (1992) *Personal and contextual aspects of young people's sexual behaviour: A brief methodological and theoretical overview*. Unpublished paper prepared for WHO/GPA/SSB, Geneva.

- (5) exploring the impact of HIV/AIDS on young people's sexual activities (e.g., knowledge of HIV transmission; issues of personal vulnerability; dynamics of condom use);
- (6) analysing the structural and contextual aspects of sexual behaviour (e.g. gender, socio-economic issues).

The review concluded by identifying future research priorities in relation to young people and HIV/AIDS. First, the cultural bases of normative attitudes and behaviour were regarded as needing further investigation, with particular focus on socioeconomic issues and the relationship between the individual and society. A second priority was the need to look closely at how to make interventions sensitive to local situations and conditions. Third, the sociopolitical context of research was identified as important to the construction of longer-term research planning.

Subsequent literature review

A subsequent review of the literature on young people and HIV/AIDS was undertaken after the studies themselves and prior to the preparation of this report. This revealed few significant shifts in the type of research being undertaken, although there were some indications of a growing concern for contextual and cultural issues. This supplementary review involved examining abstracts from the Berlin, Yokohama and Vancouver International HIV/AIDS Conferences, and conducting searches on the Medline, Popline, Sociofile and Psychlit CD ROM data bases for the years 1992-96. The aim was not to

conduct an exhaustive review of the current literature on young people and HIV/AIDS, but to identify the overall direction of social research and any more recent concerns.

One of the enduring types of research on young people, particularly among school and college students, was found to be the standard and now very familiar *Knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and practices* (KAPB) survey. These studies generally and consistently reveal the well-known disparity between levels of knowledge about AIDS and HIV transmission (usually good) and changes in risk-taking practices in response (usually less good). Recent studies in Ethiopia (Mulatu & Haile, 1996; Teka, 1993), Zaire (Binda ki Muaka, Ndonga-Kumba & Lufua-Mananga, 1993), Zimbabwe (Campbell & Mbizvo, 1994), Nicaragua (Egger et al., 1993), Namibia (Zimba, 1995), Kenya (Pattullo et al., 1994), and Mexico (JOICEFP, 1994) offer examples of the continuing deployment of this type of research. The findings of such surveys are remarkably consistent and encourage some judicious rethinking of the need to sponsor more of this kind of enquiry. While local data may be useful to confirm local specificities, the reliance on college students in particular, and the substantial sampling bias this produces in developing countries, must call into question the validity and usefulness of this type of enquiry.

A second issue in the more recent literature concerns children living on the streets. While recent studies have reported on the prevalence of STDs, poor knowledge levels about HIV/AIDS and the part played by sex in exchange for favours, goods and money (Richens, 1994), there has

been a notable shift in emphasis toward a more cultural and contextual understanding of the circumstances in which street children pursue and engage in sex. In South Africa, for example, Richter and Swart-Kruger (1996) have highlighted the inadequacy of rational choice models of risk assessment and decision making in the face of coercive sexual contexts, pointing to social conditions of risk-taking beyond the individual. Ruiz (1994) has stressed the importance of understanding street life as a culture that contextualizes risk-taking behaviour in Colombia. Raffaelli et al. (1993), using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, have described the integrated nature of sex in exchange for goods, services and (important and often neglected) pleasure in street life in a study of the early and diverse sexual experiences of street children in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Together, these studies underline the importance of understanding sexual behaviour among street children not as isolated and individual risk-taking but as aspects of collective behaviour deeply embedded in a sexual culture.

Other work concerning the meanings of sex builds on this idea of sexual culture. Domingo (1995), for example, has stressed the importance of motivation in assessing sexual activity among young Philipinos in order to develop prevention interventions. There has also emerged a concern with tensions in social life as a result of HIV/AIDS, notably in relation to religious attitudes and teachings on condom use (e.g., in Zaire - Haworth et al., 1996; in Mexico - Castaneda, Allen & Castaneda, 1996). This points to structural sources of conflict for young people in determining decisions about sexual conduct.

An added dimension to these reports on cultural context and sources of meaning for young people has been the documentation of significant gender differences. Bhende (1993) has highlighted the effects of gender inequalities on young women in Bombay, India, arguing that women's unequal status is an important factor to be taken into account in health promotion. Ford and Kittisuksathit (1994) have noted the gendered nature of sexuality and sexual expression among young Thai factory workers. Castaneda, Allen and Castaneda (1996) have pointed to the contrast between young women's and young men's expectations of sex and the tension between cultural approval for sexual experience among young men, despite demands for sexual abstinence among young women. These are important findings since they suggest that gender differences are deeply structured and culturally inscribed sets of meanings and understandings.

A number of other studies have expanded our understanding of the cultural factors affecting young people's sexual conduct, arguing for the extended use of a range of qualitative research methodologies. Focus groups and in-depth interviews feature strongly in a 13 country study of young women's sexuality described by Weiss and Rao Gupta (1996) at the XI International AIDS Conference in Vancouver. Similar work on young men's use of condoms in Zambia employed in-depth interviews (Feldman et al., 1993). Paiva (1993) used action-research methods among Brazilian young people, finding that traditional sexual culture was an important factor influencing expectations about sex. A combination of

quantitative and qualitative methods in Thailand allowed a more complex and culturally contextualized picture to emerge of young people's communication and interpersonal concerns (Pattaravanich, 1993).

This brief overview of the more recent literature on young people, HIV/AIDS and sexuality therefore reveals a growing focus on *sexual culture* and the *social contexts* within which different kinds of sexual conduct occurs. It reinforces a sense of the timeliness and focus of the Contextual Factors studies described here, and encourages an appreciation of the value of in-depth qualitative enquiry in the pursuit of a better understanding of young people's perceptions, beliefs and needs.

Conceptual framework

Taken together, findings from the two reviews identify a number of principles that informed the conceptualization and development of the Contextual Factors study and its qualitative methodology, using individual and group interviews. Theoretically, the study was based on the belief that, in order to intervene effectively in a moment of sex-related risk to prevent HIV infection, it is essential to understand how those participating view what is happening — in particular their intentions, their interests and the possible outcomes of the event. For many young people, sexual motivations are complex and may even be unclear or largely unformulated. The pursuit of sex may be bound up in confusing expectations and fears. These expectations and fears are likely to be couched in identifiable ideas, terms and frameworks and formed in local or immediate cultural contexts.

In order to develop better educational interventions to prevent HIV infection, greater emphasis needs to be given to the ways in which young people understand their social and physical worlds, and to the social and cultural processes that help them make sense of sexual desires, feelings and interests. This theoretical approach emphasizes the social and cultural rules and expectations that operate in particular societies. It focuses on the processes through which identities (including sexual identities) are acquired, developed and maintained, and on the way in which meanings about sexual behaviour and sexuality are communicated and learned.

A central theoretical assumption here is that sexual activity is, to a large extent, *socially constructed*, in addition to having its biological components, and that all societies mould basic sexual urges for their own social or cultural purposes. A good example of this direct social moulding of sexuality can be seen in the marked differences between countries in their legal ages of consent. It was important, therefore, that the research methods used were sensitive to the processes through which various societies actively construct ideas about what is sexually appropriate (or not) for young people. It was also important that all the relevant 'players' or participants in determining the appropriateness or otherwise of young people's sex lives were involved in the studies.

Attention was also directed toward other factors that may affect sexual understandings and conduct (such as historical and economic conditions), as well as to the influence of particular institutions such as legal and reli-

gious systems. Wherever possible, efforts were to be made to link with other studies that had already collected data on young people's sexual conduct using other methods (e.g., existing KAPB and Partner Relations surveys).

The overall objectives of the research programme, therefore, were to:

- examine the personal and social contexts in which sexual activity among young people takes place and the ways in which such activities are explained and justified;
- analyse the range and shaping of meanings of sexual activity among samples of young people in particular contexts and cultures;
- identify the different sources and contexts from which young people acquire their knowledge and understanding of sexual issues;
- explore the dynamic processes through which young people learn about sexual issues and appropriate sexual meanings, and how alternative meanings develop and change; and
- work toward developing culturally relevant explanatory models of sexual behaviour among young people, and assess the implications of these models for the design of appropriate preventive interventions.

The key research questions were outlined in the *General Research Protocol* and formulated to ensure that findings from the different countries undertaking the study had some common points of reference. Research questions were of two types: principal research questions, and additional research questions. The former were grouped into

three areas (although there is considerable overlap between these): questions relating to the meanings of sexual activity and sexuality (ies), including the discourses of sex; questions concerning the contexts of sexual activity; and questions about specific sexual behaviours and activities.

In terms of the meanings of sexual activity and sexuality(ies), the central questions were:

- how do young people learn, and what do they learn about sex and sexuality;
- what are the sources from which they acquire knowledge, values and attitudes, and what is the relative importance of each of these;
- how are feelings and thoughts about sexual activity shaped and formed, and how do the meanings of sex and sexuality alter in different age groups over time; and
- what do young people expect from or seek in their sexual relations?

Potential sources of information included the mass media, parents and other kin, and schools and peers, as well as less direct influences such as religion, legal systems or other cultural traditions. Examples of meanings regarding sexual conduct might include general ideas about sex and procreation. Other sexual meanings might be revealed by answers to the following questions; is sex always associated with physical pleasure? Are sexual desires publicly acknowledged or hidden? How does each society understand and recognize gender identity for males and females? Are transsexuals and transvestites recognized cultural categories? Are there

recognized rituals for sexual initiation, or for achieving sexual maturity? What are each society's ideas about sex and love, power, rebellion, curiosity, and so on?

In addition to obtaining answers to these questions, data were also to be collected on the way sex is talked about, the hierarchy of meanings, the sources of alternative meanings, the resolution of conflict between meanings (at individual and relational levels), and the development of meanings over time. In seeking to identify and explore the contexts of sex, researchers' attention was directed toward:

- the social, emotional and physical contexts in which sexual activity occurs (e.g., the extent to which early sexual contacts take place with relatively long-term partners, or with sex workers);
- respondents' expectations of particular contexts (e.g., the implication that drinking and socializing at particular places implies that one might be looking for a sexual partner, or being bought presents by an older person implies that sexual favours should be given in return);
- perceived 'rules', such as reported obligations and expectations of self and others (e.g., that all will marry);
- the integration of alternative meanings into different contexts (e.g., there may be conflicting definitions and pressures from parents, the media, peers and others);
- differing perceptions of vulnerability (e.g., how perceptions of risk of HIV infection and/or pregnancy alter with age, gender, ethnicity); and

- socially approved or disapproved sexual activities, and their relation to gender, age, sexual preference, and other factors.

Included in these considerations were to be the actual or potential impact of aspects of specific cultures, such as legal constraints (e.g., the laws that govern sexual conduct and their enforcement or contravention) and economic factors (e.g., the effects of poverty on sexual conduct). The term contexts encompassed general norms and regulations within societies, those in specific locations, and those affecting interpersonal behaviour in localized settings.

Information was also to be gathered on the sexual practices of individual respondents, with particular attention being given to the details of events and contexts, and of personal explanations, interpretations and justifications. The relational aspects of sexuality were seen as particularly important. These included such things as the emotional (or affective) aspects of sexual activity, the kinds of partnerships entered into, and how these are understood, valued and talked about. Since the direct observation of sexual activity was not possible, personal accounts and explanations of sexual activity were to be sought. Social settings in which young people actively pursue the development of sexual interests and relations e.g., at discothèques or in leisure activities), were to be targeted for systematic observation by researchers.

As stated above, research teams participating in the programme were encouraged to add to the study design additional research themes

and questions that arose for their particular country, for the areas chosen as their research sites, and/or which related to the samples chosen. Possible additional themes included the migration of young men from rural to urban areas, changes in traditional sexual values and meanings as a result of economic development, and the local impact of new sex education programmes on contemporary sexual identities.

It was hoped these studies would lead to:

- a better appreciation of dominant sexual understandings, sexual meanings, sexual identities and sexual cultures in seven contrasting sites;
 - a sounder understanding of the implications of such understandings, meanings, identities and cultures for self-understanding and individual sexual behaviour;
 - a comparison between the ways young women and men come to understand themselves sexually, and the consequences of this for patterns of sexual behaviour;
 - analyses of sexual behaviour perceived as 'risky' (in relation to HIV and STDs) within a specific culture; and
- implications for health promotion interventions to minimize risk-related sexual behaviour.

Throughout 1993, site visits were undertaken to over 12 countries to identify potential principal investigators and to assess institutional capacity to undertake studies of this complexity. Potential principal investigators were invited to attend a briefing meeting to familiarize themselves with the *General Research Protocol*, and to receive guidance on development of the country-specific local research proposals. Draft local research proposals were subsequently submitted for assessment, returned with suggestions for improvements, and were then reviewed formally by the GPA Steering Committee on Social and Behavioural Research in October 1993 and March 1994.

The local research proposals from seven countries were chosen to participate in the programme: Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, Costa Rica, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Zimbabwe. These seven countries received funds from WHO/GPA/UNAIDS to undertake the studies, most of which took an average of two years to complete. The final study (that in Cambodia) finished in 1996, and this comparative analysis of findings was finalized some nine months afterwards.

STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The overall research methodology employed in the studies was qualitative, with an emphasis on an in-depth comprehension of people's own experiences, rather than the use of statistical analysis for the purposes of generalization. The aim was to identify the social processes that need to be understood when thinking about HIV-related public health policies and programmes. The multi-site study aimed to theorize the relation between individuals, their immediate milieux, and broader social and cultural forces. We can understand how a society works best when we understand how its citizens interact on a daily basis with each other, with groups of people, and with others in institutions and organizations. In this kind of enquiry, therefore, individual experience is investigated, not for the purpose of accounting for majority or minority patterns of behaviours, but in order to *explain* experience and behaviour. The aim is not to produce information on population characteristics, but to provide the sometimes detailed and complex ideas needed for policy and programme development and implementation.

Generalization is possible in qualitative research, but not at the level of majority or minority experience and their correlates. Instead, it is possible to identify and characterize the social forces or cultural components underlying individual or group behaviour. Generalization can also occur when assessing the contribution of particular cultural and historical forces to patterns of behaviour, and by revealing

institutional imperatives in one population (e.g., school rules, religious prohibitions and so on) that are likely to produce the same effects, actions and understandings in other similar populations. In other words, by uncovering how social forces and cultural components affect a certain population, it is often possible to generalize these findings to other populations affected by the same forces and components. As we will see, in these studies' findings there are similarities that cross national boundaries and even span continental divides, and these can judiciously be generalized to other countries. There are also country-specific practices and understandings, however, that relate directly and only to a particular country itself.

Research plan

The studies were undertaken in three stages: a rapid assessment process; a period of main fieldwork; and an analysis and write-up period.

Rapid assessment

The purposes of the rapid assessment were to enable local research teams to fine-tune their original research design, pinpoint more exactly fieldwork sites, and assess and clarify the sampling frame. This period allowed for corrections to the original proposals, designed as they had to be in abstract, and proved an important and useful step. For example, one study (Chile) added a third group of young people to its planned two-part sample after their initial rapid assessment. This enabled the inclusion of young people marginalized from mainstream society and whose sexual behaviour was found to be somewhat different.

Rapid assessments also allowed the research teams to test out both the principal research methods common to all sites (see below), their chosen additional research methods, and to undertake some initial key-informant interviewing to sharpen the focus on principal and additional research questions. Reports from the rapid assessments were sent to WHO/GPA for technical assessment and individual research teams were assisted, where necessary, in adjusting the final design for the main fieldwork period.

Main fieldwork

During the main fieldwork period, technical assistance was made available to the research teams. This included site visits by staff, consultants and temporary advisers; regular communication and information; and informal support from other interested parties. Various conferences and meetings, and later e-mail correspondence to some sites, facilitated more regular communication and provided additional opportunities for sharing ideas, discussing fieldwork problems and keeping the seven studies in touch with each other.

Analysis and write up

A meeting in Geneva in 1994 of all principal investigators provided an important first opportunity to share preliminary findings, identify major themes, explore similarities and differences in the evolving analyses, and established a common framework and process for producing individual country reports. Finally, an assessment of individual countries' draft final reports by the authors of this report provided a further oppor-

tunity to sharpen detail, clarify argument, and focus recommendations.

Principal research methods

Three principal research methods were employed in all studies: individual interviews, focus groups, and participant observation. The standardized use of these three principal research methods was intended to generate data that could be used for comparative purposes across the seven countries.

As the term *individual interviews* suggests, this research method involves interviewing people in a one-to-one situation. Such interviews were conducted primarily with young people, but also with selected 'key players' identified during the rapid assessment. In relation to young people, the intention was to explore in a confidential way issues related to sexual conduct and understanding. In general, such interviews lasted between one and two hours (although longer in some places), and the researchers explored the principal and additional research questions in a flexible manner. Wherever possible, interviews were tape-recorded with the informed consent of the interviewee.

The term *participant observation* covers a range of research techniques from 'observer as participant' to 'participant as observer', the main purpose in this case being to allow close observation of the everyday behaviour and contexts that relate to sexual activity. The extent to which an observer can become fully immersed in the activities under observation depends on many things, including the nature of the activity itself, and the

relationship between the observer and those being observed. Direct observation of sexual activity was not possible in these studies (nor is it in most HIV/AIDS research irrespective of methodology), therefore self-report is usually the source of most data. However, much can be gained from careful study of the social contexts in which potential sexual contacts are made, and which provide, shape and give meaning to sexuality in specific cultures. Suggested participant observation contexts included bars, clubs, discothèques, parks, streets and other places where young people congregated or met regularly. Such observations were intended to provide useful information on the manner in which relationships are formed, the patterns of interaction between people, the rules that govern behaviour in such contexts, and the range of 'key players' in each setting.

The basic aim of *focus groups* is to encourage a group of between five and ten people to focus on specified topics through a set of facilitated activities and to gather data through an interactive process of collective reflection.⁴ The composition of the groups selected in these studies depended on the sites in which the fieldwork was undertaken, but were expected to be constituted largely of young people, although the method could in principle be used with other interested parties such as parents and youth leaders.

Additional research methods

All research teams were encouraged to add additional research methods to their design if this was thought to be useful. This was done in the recognition that country-specific research questions might require different methods of investigation, or that certain sections of samples chosen might prefer other methods. Most research teams took advantage of this opportunity to expand the scope of their research. Additional research methods chosen included the use of 'vignettes' in Papua New Guinea, an ethnographic case study of a discothèque in Chile, linguistic analysis of terms and meanings of words for sex and sexual relations in the Philippines, discourse analysis in Costa Rica, peer-led focus groups and peer participation in preliminary analysis in Cambodia, and attendance at certain ritual events in Cameroon.

Fieldwork sites and sampling

In their local research proposals, research teams were asked to nominate at least two sites in which to undertake their research. The purpose of having at least two sites in each country was to encourage possibilities for comparison or contrast, thereby preventing an artificially narrow view of young people from unwittingly emerging. Various combinations of site-selection criteria were used. Some teams chose three sites (Papua New Guinea, Zimbabwe). Some drew a rural-urban distinction (Cambodia,

⁴ *Focus groups are a valuable method for obtaining a wide range of understandings, views, opinions and attitudes on particular social and cultural activities. Focus groups are not the same as group interviews, where participants in turn are asked similar questions and individual experience is reported in front of others for comment or reflection.*

Papua New Guinea, Cameroon), and two selected contrasting sectors of the same cities using social class and socioeconomic status as the distinguishing factor (Chile, Philippines). Still others chose a capital city/provincial town difference (Costa Rica, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Zimbabwe). The attempt here at contrast and comparison was not one that argued that complete coverage of all young people could thereby be achieved. Rather, the aim was for high contrast, which would maximize the capacity for clear comparison so that social processes could be uncovered. The details of each country's site selection are contained in the final country reports, and these are summarized in the Appendix to this comparative analysis.

The *General Research Protocol* provided research teams with guidelines on the sampling frame to be employed. The studies' samples were constituted, in the main, by young people. Within these parameters, it was important to specify the involvement of particular age ranges in each country, since it was anticipated that these would vary considerably across cultures. So that national comparisons would be possible, sampling covered fairly similar ages in all of the studies. The age range for young people in each study was: Cambodia 15-26; Cameroon 15-30; Chile 18-22; Costa Rica 12-19; Papua New Guinea 12-24; Philippines 16-24; and Zimbabwe 13-24.

In order to analyse gender issues and their relation to sexual matters, it was important that young women and young men be equally selected, except in circumstances where an over-sampling of one sex or the other was necessary for a particular reason.

In cases where existing data on young people were available, such as information from surveys conducted for WHO or other agencies, research teams were asked not to replicate such data collection but to use existing data as a starting point to ensure that the relatively small numbers of young people recruited for detailed investigation in the study were reasonably typical of the larger population of young people in at least some respects. In some countries, existing data included social descriptors such as age, education level or ethnic background, and sexuality indices such as age at first intercourse, numbers of partners and patterns of contraceptive use. Similarly, the selection of members of focus group discussions was to be guided by data from these other sources where applicable.

It should be noted that representativeness was not required for this study. Instead, the aim was to develop a heterogeneous grouping of respondents in terms of their relation to the research questions. In this sense, the sample recruited at any site was constructed theoretically in relation to the principal and additional research questions. *Theoretical sampling* can be defined as a systematic process of selection developed from an understanding of the theoretical field, a recognition of the social circumstances surrounding the issue to be researched, and an initial estimation of which populations might best provide useful data on these particular research questions. As a result, who is interviewed, when, and how will be decided as the research progresses, according to one's assessment of one's current state of knowledge and one's judgement as to how it might be developed further (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1989).

Comparability across studies was to be achieved not only through the basic sampling frame involving common social descriptors and sexuality indices, heterogeneity, and sample weighting (if used), but also through the relationship between the groups of young people selected and the issues being investigated. For example, if migration between rural areas and cities were regarded as an important issue, then young people who are involved in this migration would obviously be a starting point for sample recruitment.

Sample sizes

The methodology used in this study was never intended to generate data on the relative frequencies of particular sexual or social behaviours. Rather, it was designed to explore the range of sexual meanings, identities and cultures. Each research team was expected to obtain a heterogeneous sample of young people in the particular country, community or site, developed from the theoretical sampling model. Exact sample sizes, therefore, were not specified in the *General Research Protocol*. Instead, general guidelines were developed to assist each research team in developing their sampling frame. It was planned that each study would complete between 100 and 200 individual interviews, and between 10 and 30 focus group discussions. The exact allocation of these numbers between sample categories (e.g., young people versus other 'players') was to be decided after the initial rapid assessment process.

The various studies produced differently structured samples as a result of

employing the principles of theoretical sampling. In Cambodia, 341 respondents in two sites were involved (146 young men, 135 young women, 60 others—adults, key informants or officials). In Cameroon, a total of 550 participants were interviewed, 301 men and 249 women in three sites. Of these, 108 were key informants. An additional 22 focus groups were conducted. In Costa Rica, 56 people in two sites were interviewed (25 young men and 31 young women). This study did, however, involve interviews of much greater length than the others did. An additional 48 people participated in focus group discussions, with approximately equal numbers in each site. In Chile, the sample was divided into three different socioeconomic categories investigated through the following techniques: 21 group discussions involving approximately 250 young people; 36 individual interviews on general discourses of sexuality; 26 individual interviews on selected sexuality topics; 48 individual interviews on information systems; and innumerable observations in the ethnographic study of the discothèque. The sampling in almost all categories was divided equally between the sexes. The Philippines study involved 78 young men and women in the initial rapid assessment stage, 120 in in-depth interviews and 70 in focus groups in the main fieldwork period, equally divided between the sexes, and 33 others in both phases — a total of 301 respondents in two sites, divided into two categories in each site by socioeconomic class. In Papua New Guinea, the research team held 64 focus group discussions, 174, 331 and 493 'media, 'personal' and 'secret' interviews respectively,⁵ and 77 key

5 See the Papua New Guinea research report summary in the Appendix for an explanation of these interview types.

informant interviews. Fifty-two respondents were observed. This large number of 1,191 study participants (560 males and 631 females) across three sites must be understood within the framework of the much shorter interview methods used in the study. Finally, the Zimbabwe study involved 82 young men and 91 young women in individual interviews. A further 21 focus groups and 5 key informant interviews were conducted with members of both sexes in three sites.

Time scale

The first studies were funded at the end of 1993, and a second set was funded in March 1994. All studies were under way by mid-1994. All final reports had been received by the end of 1996, although it was necessary to seek clarification on aspects of methodology and study findings throughout the early part of 1997. This comparative analysis was completed some six months later.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

There are a number of levels at which the findings from this study have relevance beyond the individual countries involved. The first derives from the closeness gained to young people. Throughout the analyses, there is a clear sense of contact with, respect for, and knowledge gained from an extended engagement with young people. There were no one-off, brief and carefully distanced ('objective') moments of contact. Instead, sex is presented as an embodied, meaningful, collective act for young people. Sensation is felt, bodies matter, minds cogitate, and real young people struggle with the meaning of *their* desire. The cultures studied are clearly in conflict over young people's sexual conduct and no amount of denial or refusal will counteract that. As a number of country reports note, it is not young people who are the problem, but the way they are (mis)understood by many who seek to work with them.

This brings us to a second purpose behind this analysis — the desire to develop new thinking and better HIV/AIDS health promotion for young people in developing countries. Marked levels of sexual risk-taking are noted in all reports. This should not surprise anyone. What should surprise is the complexity of personal and cultural investment in forms of conduct that — at least in the minds of health professionals, epidemiologists and health educators — are so easily reduced to 'risk-taking'. What appears on the surface as intractable behaviour is in fact

historically formed and trusted patterns of conduct, and ways of relating.

Key concepts

The concepts of sexual culture, sexual identity and sexual meaning allow us to cluster superficially different and culturally distinct experiences of sexual activity among young people into understandings that cut across the seven countries involved.

Sexual culture

Sexual culture is a concept that recognizes that there are systems of sexual behaviour among any group of people. The term suggests that sexual activity is not simply a manifestation of biological drives or 'natural' processes. As used in this study, the concept of sexual culture allows us to understand the origin and source of information about sex and specific expectations of it. It also helps us recognize the specific shaping of erotic procedures and sensations, and why one form of sexual expression may be taken for granted in one culture but eschewed in another.

In this sense, sexual cultures are to be regarded as social products, made and re-made in daily life, often locally, and therefore adaptable to changing pressures and circumstances. For example, notable findings across all countries in this study were the rapidly changing expectations and practices of sex among young people as a result of modernization and rapid urban growth. A second example might be different understandings of the importance of virginity to young women and men expressed by different groups of young people even

within a single country. And if there is a single key overall finding from these studies, it is that there are *many* sexual cultures within a particular setting, and no individual country has merely one.

Sexual identity

Sexual identity is a concept that provides a psychological (or psychic) place for situating the self in sexual activity. This recognition of the self in sex (how one behaves, what one wants, what one expects of oneself and others) is crucial to any individual's accurate assessment of risk in relation to potential HIV or STD infection.

Sexual identity is a recent and very Western term, receiving significant attention since the rise of second-wave feminism, often in relation to, and sometimes confused with, gender identity. Gay and lesbian theory has also addressed the issue of sexual identity, particularly in the personal consequences of same-sex sexual partner choice. The distinction between sexual identity and gender identity can be difficult to maintain, as gender plays a crucial part in structuring the sexual identities of young people in all countries in the study. Indeed, larger structural imbalances between the sexes have profound consequences for the expectations and experiences of young men and women in sexual matters and emotional relationships. Among the findings of this study, worrying conse-

quences of the differences between sexes included the common experience of sex exchanged for favours among young women, and the belief in the urgent 'need' for sexual experience among young men. In this analysis, sexual identities will be used solely to deal with matters of sexual activity and interests; the term gender identity will be used to refer to other issues of masculinity and femininity.

Sexual identity and gender identity are not just about personal relationships and a sense of the self, but also about finding one's place in families and communities, and in economic and cultural life. For example, in Papua New Guinea personal identity is linked traditionally with land, its use and with certain areas or homelands. This link has been weakened by migration, mobility and the undermining of traditional modes of social control related to membership of, and participation in, that traditional social and economic order — in a sense, one is what one does within the broader community. Older people in Papua New Guinea lament this weakening of traditional life, particularly in sexual matters, and see this as a source of permissiveness and sexual experimentation. In other words, they observe the shift from identity based on kin or territory to a more psychological sense of self, acted out also in sexual conduct.⁶

This shift signals a major, unnoticed impact of modernization on developing countries, one that is occurring rapidly and unsteadily. One conse-

⁶ This shift from collective to personal individualized identity, as modernization proceeds, is largely unnoticed by many identity-obsessed Westerners, but is worthy of greater attention. It registers a breaking-up of local cultures, which education programmes, particularly those charged with personal or health education, may need to tackle. These are longer-term issues that need to be taken into account in development and modernization programmes, health and education initiatives, and in HIV/AIDS and sex education.

quence of this rapid and unsteady change was noted again in the Papua New Guinea report. There, in the somewhat lost and marginalized situation for some young people in Port Moresby, landlessness and lack of employment prospects (and therefore no cash substitute for wealth) creates *raskol* (hoodlum) activity. This is contributing to the widespread rape of young women, which as the Papua New Guinea report notes is 'seen as theft'. These shifts in identity from its historical and traditional roots were noted also in Cameroon and Zimbabwe in strikingly similar ways, and in each case were seen as a major contribution to changing sexual conduct among young people.

Although some older respondents in these studies saw this in a cause and effect way, this is *not* the important point. Rather, it is vital to recognize that sexual conduct is not uniformly regarded as 'naturally' constitutive of the self in all cultures, as it is in the West, but is becoming so as social and economic modernization proceeds. We are all now familiar with projective environmental impact studies, increasingly regarded as necessary before any economic development activity begins. It may be that future development and modernization initiatives should assess 'sexual impact' in a similar way by looking, for example, at the way in which a new mining town might produce increased prostitution. This would acknowledge the broader social and cultural consequence of development initiatives.

Sexual meaning

Sexual meaning as a concept offers a way of getting a firmer grip on the significance of sexual activity to young

people. The meanings of sexual conduct and interests can vary greatly: meaning can be derived from collective and traditional rituals, or from a more modernized personal desire. Other sexual meanings can be generated in close interpersonal relationships, or are derived from more general societal expectations about sex. Meanings change, and the influence of an increasingly internationalized framework for understanding sexual activity has been greatly extended with the advent of the HIV pandemic. This has already been noted in relation to sexual identity. Beyond that issue, Western frameworks, notably the binary opposition between 'heterosexual' and 'homosexual' people, imposes an interpretative framework at times at odds with indigenous and local understandings, yet one that is increasingly pervasive. This binary opposition is barely 100 years old in its dominant position as *the* interpretative sexuality framework. It is also increasingly subject to critique in current sexuality theory in the West. Argument about its limitation as a framework for understanding sexual conduct in HIV/AIDS work has been already clearly established in earlier debates on sexuality and HIV/AIDS in Latin America, and are again pertinent in these studies.

However, mass communication is promoting a 'heterosexual'/'homosexual' conceptualization of sexuality as almost *the* single global understanding of many young people's sexual experiences and expectations. The effects of this are still partial as noted, for example, in Cambodia where young people reported themselves as indisputably 'heterosexual' but did not regard those men who engaged in same-sex activity as 'homosexual'.

Similarly, same-sex activity in Papua New Guinea is rarely regarded as homosexual (and almost never as 'gay'). Among working class and marginal youth in Costa Rica and to a lesser extent in the Philippines and Cambodia, same-sex sexual conduct was largely regarded as gender-related. The *playos* of Costa Rica, the *kteuy* of Cambodia and the *bakla* of the Philippines (all effeminate men who engage in same-sex activity) were seen mostly as products of gender inversion — in essence more transsexual than homosexual. This example offers just one obvious moment of seeing how sexual meanings are not universal or uniform, even when they describe superficially similar kinds of behaviour.

Contrasts between countries in relation to sexual meanings were most marked with respect to gender. There is no doubt that relationships are more important to most young women than they are to most young men, and that the physical sensations of sex acts dominate most young men's minds. There were, however, exceptions to this general point about differences between young men and young women, and these must be taken into account in any attempt to insert a biological or genetic explanation for such differences here. Any simplistic idea that maleness or femaleness is the fundamental source of these differences fails to take into account the powerful effects of social class, regional contrast and modernization. In other words, there is much more than biology involved here.

The importance of sexual meaning as a theme cannot be underestimated. Irrespective of somewhat different methods of investigation or tech-

niques of analysis, the central significance of sex to young people can no longer be in dispute. Sex is not an area of conduct that does not belong to young people, even if some adult members of each society wish it were so. Clearly, the young people in these studies have their own sexuality, whatever the rules, whatever the traditions, and whatever the dangers. Any notion of young people as somehow still pre-sexual, or simply play-acting at sex, or practising a little in preparation for later, must be rejected for a framework that now recognizes young people as fully sexual beings, logically and legitimately so. Whether adults like it or not, the young people in these seven countries *own* their sexual conduct already.

This recognition profoundly affects our assessment of the importance of sex and sexual relationships for young people, and must force a reckoning with *their* meanings about sex. In other words, although there is indeed conflict and contradiction between traditional sexual mores and young people's current sexual conduct in all countries studied, any new set of meanings attached by young people to current sexual activity must be taken seriously and dealt with respectfully if we are to assist young people in coping adequately with HIV/AIDS and other sexual health issues. It is clear that young people can and do simply ride out the contradictions between their ideas and those of their parents, and conflicts between traditional and more modern values. Sometimes this might be done through cognitive strategies of 'compartmentalization', as the Costa Rica study suggests. Sometimes new sexual possibilities are opened up as a result of migration and mobility as suggested in Cameroon

and Zimbabwe, or by the creation of a new language for sex and sexual relations as noted in the Philippines and Cambodia. There are also indications of countervailing discourses of gender transformation, e.g., transsexualism, or modernization and individual pleasure, as evidenced in Chile and Papua New Guinea, which provide young people with new meanings for sex and new ideas about what sex is for.

These all become *strategies of legitimation* for new sexual ideas among young people, and can be effectively used as resources in health promotion and prevention education. All the Contextual Factors studies argue for the need for HIV/STD prevention to be couched in the terms of young people, in their own words and meanings. These strategies of legitimation provide the resources for an effective educational approach, as noted in the Philippines report:

The present research project shows active, discerning young adults, not necessarily well informed, but in spite of these problems, managing to negotiate with the world around them. The inquisitiveness of young adults needs to be encouraged, and a good place to start is handling this curiosity as it relates to sex and sexuality, allowing young adults to question norms, and in the process, recognizing their self worth.

The purpose of the three concepts

These three themes, sexual culture, sexual identity and sexual meaning, in their distinct ways, are useful tools for examining young people's sexual conduct in other countries beyond these seven, and for doing so in a way directly related to harvesting material for developing health promotion

strategies. A few examples will illustrate the importance and subtlety of sexual meanings and their shifts, noted in all studies as vital to accurate representations of young people's sexual experience and their understanding of sexual activity and its deeper relational contexts.

Example one. It is important to recognize *pror chuk* (to pump the penis), the new word that young Cambodian people have given the Khmer language to describe masturbation for men. There were many other terms noted in that study for oral and anal sex, masturbation, and so on that young people use.

Example two. In this same country, it is important to understand the significant difference between *kou songsar* (a relationship without sexual activity) and *kou sne'har* (a relationship implying sexual activity). This distinction registers a shift in young people's relations with boyfriends or girlfriends to something deeper, something potentially involving sexual love. This is similar to the idea of a 'person with rights' in Costa Rica, a term which allows young women to permit young men greater exploration of their bodies.

Example three. In the Philippines, the idea of *madala* implies being swept along erotically and relationally, not necessarily but often towards, sexual activity. Similarly, in Costa Rica the notion of *templado*, in both women and men, registers a kind of irrefusable body 'heat', a burgeoning sexual desire that permits, and even demands, satisfaction.

These are not just semantic differences or merely local slang. Nor is a simple argument being mounted here merely to encourage the use of local language or colloquialisms in health education. That all studies offered detailed accounts of the subtle shifts in terms used by young people for sex acts and sexual relations, indicates the importance of such detail to young people themselves. In all the countries studied, young people employ specific and finely graded terms and shades of meanings both to understand what is happening to themselves and their bodies, and to locate themselves within their culture and age group. These terms and meanings help young people to measure themselves against adults and their immediate milieux. They verify sexual progress and assuage fear, doubt, guilt and any sense of being lost to an incomprehensible sexual desire. In the adult world's deafening silence that surrounds young people's sexual conduct in all countries studied, and in the face of the appalling lack of information with which young people in every country in the study seek to understand sex, these terms and the culturally specific concepts they embody enable young people to find their sexual 'feet'. The terms encode and make possible sexual interactions. Without them, confusion reigns for young people and their bodies become their only teachers.

Health promotion that either relies on clinical lists of sex practices or concepts of sexual development that universalize the specific to the point of misrecognition (e.g., theories of adolescent development) will fail to reach young people. Again, a simple example comes from one site in the Philippines. Here, the notion of first

sexual experience makes no sense when there is a commonplace of five 'sexual baptisms' for a young man: sex with an *agi* (a cross-dressing homosexual man), a female sex worker, an older woman, a girlfriend, and finally his wife. Similarly, in Costa Rica among more affluent and educated young people, virginity is widely regarded more as psychological state and therefore both young women and men 'lose' their virginity. This contrasts with a more direct physical understanding of virginity (and its loss for young women alone) among working-class Costa Ricans, thereby registering also that meanings shift not just from country to country but within countries themselves.

Similarities

A set of recurrent themes and issues emerge from the seven countries. These are: concepts of youth; the challenge to traditional cultures; gender; modernization; urban, rural and provincial aspects; and other effects of larger social forces.

Concepts of youth

Not surprisingly, all countries reported a special category for young people, although the definition and boundaries changed from country to country. There is an important lesson here: undoubtedly the category 'young people' offers a way of defining this particular population, which can be generalized so as to make global comparisons among all young people. There was a remarkably uniform concept of young people in relation to age cohort and maturation, even when the onset of sexual activity and the time to marry (the parameters in many countries) differed between age

cohorts quite markedly. So, a focus on young people is understood everywhere as valid.

Yet herein lies a danger: a kind of global, essentialist category called 'young people' tends to mask quite diverse cultural definitions. What is also clear is that definitions of young people are changing in relation to sexual activity. In Zimbabwe and Cameroon, and also in Papua New Guinea and Cambodia in slightly different ways, young women were once regarded as ready for sexual activity at or not long after menarche. In the past, in some of these countries these young women were then 'traded' as wives through various methods and customs of exchange, dowry or bride price. In almost all countries in the study (though with different kinds of explanation) young men were regarded as 'needing' sexual experience once they were pubescent, and sex with sex workers, male peers or older women was sought, encouraged tacitly or facilitated directly by older males, families or peers. Although these ideas are often couched in questionable 'naturalized' terms, i.e., related to some biologicistic characteristic or 'hydraulic' proclivity,⁷ the important point is that these practices all register a widely held, if unstated, view of young people as sexual beings from puberty.

Undoubtedly this view is increasingly undermined by processes of delaying young people's accession of full adult status and rights, and the extension of their dependency through longer schooling or high unemployment, noted earlier. This shift in the definition of young people up to ages of 26

at times, carries with it an explicit intention to delay or prevent young people from engaging in sexual activity that, in some cases only a generation or two ago, was seen as perfectly 'natural' or understandable.

Yet it is also clear that young people in all seven countries (and likely everywhere else) are contesting such creeping 'infantilization' with their bodies and in their sexual pursuits. Indeed, the Costa Rica report notes that delayed marriage and extended educational training, mainly at universities, among middle-class young people has actually enabled premarital sex to be more permissible among those young people, as they increasingly regard the delay as unacceptable. All seven country reports argue that exhortations to abstinence or delayed sexual activity are resisted by many young people and seen for what they are — moral agendas dressed up as health promotion.

Second, the age ranges chosen by the various studies reported here are sufficiently different to force a recognition that 'young people' is a category that must be culturally defined first and foremost, even if it is under increasing international pressure to be all-inclusive and consistent for the sake of programmatic and bureaucratic neatness. The very notion of young people as being that cohort, for example, from 12 to 26 should be regarded as a dubious fiction, and the recent broader acceptance of the definition of the 'child' as having an upper age limit of 18 is similarly questionable in this regard. In the Philippines, where 18 is regarded as the minimum age for marriage, such a definition may seem

⁷ *Notions of biological or hormonal 'pressures' that build up and demand 'release'.*

appropriate for a country where the average age at first sexual activity was reported as being between 18 and 19 for young men and between 21 and 22 for young women. But this age marker is irrelevant in Papua New Guinea where the period between the appearance of secondary sex characteristics and marriage is relatively short, in direct contrast to its lengthening in the West. Elsewhere, the onset of sexual activity was reported as sometimes being as early as 9 in Zimbabwe, and in Chile 32% of young people reported having had sex before age 15.

Third, there is certainly some evidence that extended schooling and increased retention rates in some countries in this study are prolonging the period in which young people remain in this category as a cohort before being regarded finally as adults. Indeed, there were accounts from more affluent young women in Zimbabwe who are consciously delaying sexual intercourse (but pursuing other sex practices such as 'fingering' and 'smooching') so as not to affect their schooling. Similarly, young women in Papua New Guinea argued that were there more schooling on offer, they would delay sexual activity if they were likely to obtain better job prospects as a result.

This effect, however, may only apply to young women. Young men in those parts of the various samples where the most change was happening to young women's prospects, as noted in Costa Rica, Chile and to a lesser extent the Philippines, seem to accept certain changes in gender role, but this seems scarcely to affect their pursuit of penetrative sex when and wherever possible. This is an important issue for sexual

health education. In a sense there is an increasing tension between changing gender roles, and the potential sexual consequences of them, that young men are handling less well than women.

In contrast, some reports note that young people are also becoming sexually active earlier (e.g., in Cambodia), and are engaging in sex with a larger number of partners (e.g., in Chile), and a wider repertoire of practices (e.g., anal and oral sex in Costa Rica and Cambodia). All reports note same-sex activity and use of prostitutes among young men. The reports from Zimbabwe, Papua New Guinea and Cameroon note a significant and actively pursued (sometimes encouraged) culture of sex for favours, goods or cash among young women. The prospect is slim for this progressive 'infantilization' of young people producing a significant delay in onset of sexual activity, or a widespread shift to monogamy.

Indeed, the only prospect for such a delay would appear to lie with comprehensive sex education, noted in the research literature as definitely not producing earlier onset of sexual activity, and in some places achieving delayed onset. This determination of young people to have a sexual life of their own would seem to reinforce the finding in all countries in this study that sex education is wanted and much needed by young people. These seven countries report sex education as woefully inadequate everywhere, as do their young people.

The challenge to traditional sexual culture

There is no doubt that all countries are experiencing a waning of 'traditional'

sexual values and cultures coinciding with this growing pressure to identify young people as a special category. In some countries where sexual activity among this cohort was less problematic in traditional cultures, young people are using aspects of traditional culture to fashion a new one. The increase in a culturally transformed group male circumcision in Papua New Guinea, using far from hygienic means, represents a determination to create, anew, sexual meaning where it once was. Similarly, the use of sex workers by young Cambodian men receives a perverse kind of approval from the still-dominant traditional value placed on the virginity of its brides. No doubt, traditions of dry sex in Cameroon, for example, also create current problems in relation to condom use and damage to genitals, countering claims that it is the loss of sexual traditions that has led to increases in STDs. Traditional sexual culture is often involved in the production of the very 'deviancies' it deplores.

More worrying is the transformation of traditional patterns of exchange, in which sex was once unproblematically a part, into a widespread cash-for-sex or goods-for-sex sexual economy noted in Zimbabwe and Papua New Guinea. Ironically, this transformation has also enabled young women to fashion for themselves a kind of sexual independence in which body pleasures have found legitimacy. These two reports also noted that families and kin are often involved in either encouraging or setting the terms of this exchange; so, again, any appeal to tradition would appear less than unsullied by its own history.

Another aspect of the challenge to traditional culture can be found in the idea that young men's sexual

needs are beyond their control and demand immediate satisfaction. Held as true by men and women in every country in this study, this pervasive myth can either be read as confirmation of modern feminism's conception of a universal patriarchy, or as proof of the particular interpretation of biomedicine that sexual interests are merely genetically or hormonally driven. More telling is the confusion expressed by so many young men in these studies as to the exact meaning of the things they feel, and their ineptitude in translating those embodied feelings and experiences into any explanation other than those handed down to them by their fathers, brothers and other males. If young people are experiencing dilemmas in relation to their sexual instincts and conduct, these country reports confirm that it is largely the failure of traditional sexual cultures to offer meaningful, actionable rules for conduct and sensible guidance as to sexual relations which is at fault. Before fault is so easily found with young people themselves, it is important to note how often we ask that they grow to sexual maturity in silence, amid misrepresentation, and on their own. If they make mistakes (according to adults' terms), it is most probably because they are inexperienced, ill informed and unseasoned, not because they are, by definition, reckless.

Gender

There is a striking convergence in all seven country reports in the experiences of young women and their difficulty of handling young men's expectation and understanding of sex acts, sexuality and sexual relations. There are a number of related issues here:

- differential cultural understandings of young women's and men's sexuality;
- different expectations of young women and young men in relation to sexual conduct;
- the centrality of virginity to young women's sexuality and challenges to that centrality;
- the experience of coerced sexual activity and rape among young women (and some young men); and
- the effects of modernization on gender roles.

Individual country reports all highlight a similar differential in cultural understandings of young women's and young men's sexuality. Although there are some differences between countries (and some divergence within countries themselves), there is a marked perception that young men are sexual beings and young women ought not to be. This is recognizable at the simplest level as the 'double standard' noted by feminist writers over the last century or more.⁸ The only country to report a formal traditional pattern of young men's sexual abstinence was Cambodia, where novitiates in Buddhist monasteries once paralleled young women's period of seclusion prior to (quite early) marriage. The practice of young men entering temples for a period was almost destroyed during Cambodia's tragic recent history and is only now being encouraged anew. However, parallel evidence in the Cambodia study of male-to-male eroticism in the

temples questions the extent of abstinence achieved.

In the pervasive formulation of their 'needing' sexual experience, the origin or nature of the sex partners whom these young men are so energetic to find and actively penetrate remains tacit. Unless they are animals, male peers, sex workers, or older women and men (all reported in these studies), these unnamed sex partners can clearly only be young women. So this double standard also masks an underlying contradiction within understandings of femininity itself: an implicit recognition of the sexual potential of young women and of their silenced engagement in sexual activity with young men. Another result of this double standard is that sexually active young women, or those assumed to be so, are subject to derogatory classification as sluts, whores, cheap, fallen, wayward, sick or shameful.

In these studies, one example of those contradictions in action to the detriment of young women is also a Cambodian one, where the deflowering of young women is regarded as the ultimate sport by young men (although it would appear that fewer have actually experienced it than report the desire to do so), replete with mythologies about the act itself and its consequences. Any (and many) young women so 'deflowered' are dishonoured thereby, as well as by the dishonourable action of many young men in rejecting them soon afterwards

⁸ *The essential meaning of the double standard is that women ought not have sex outside of culturally approved boundaries, almost uniformly marriage, and that young men must 'sow their wild oats' and gain sexual experience whenever and wherever they can. There is usually a begrudging deference to some vague notion of young men remaining sexually inexperienced as well, but this carries little weight at the collective behavioural level, even if it is enforced and valued at the individual level for some or as doxy.*

for their acquiescence to sex. This double bind for young women operates hand-in-hand with a high value placed on virgin brides.

The issue of women's virginity arose in all studies and remains a dominant framework within which young women are forced to understand their bodies, their sexual interests and any sexual experience. As the best marker of the double bind for young women, virginity is still held as important in two ways: as a guarantee of the value of a potential marriage partner, and as proof of the character and worthiness of each young woman in the eyes of her partner, family and community. Yet, the value placed on young women's virginity is ambiguous for many espousing it. Young women clearly find it an uncertain barrier to sexual activity, and in Costa Rica and Chile among middle-class young people it has lost its once considerable status. The Chile report argues that middle-class young women *and* men now see virginity as a largely symbolic and psychological state, a hurdle between sexual inexperience and sexual experience to be positively leapt over. In this sense, loss of virginity for both is a rite of passage not a terrible sin. But more working-class respondents in these studies still place a wavering emphasis on virginity at odds with their more middle-class, educated colleagues. This may reflect both some impact from modern feminism and a weakening of the utility of virginity in guaranteeing anything. The Philippines study noted that births out of wedlock to famous political and artistic figures were defended as being 'modern'. In Papua New Guinea, virginity is less valued in practice than in principle, and the sexual initiation of young women is pursued

vigorously by young people and their elders. Indeed there, as in Zimbabwe, young women's claims to sexual pleasure clearly help invalidate notions of abstinence and opposition to premarital sex.

This challenge to virginity is a complex one. In Cambodia most young men still demand a virgin bride, and this is the case in other country reports. But young men's avid pursuit of penetrative sex with young women almost guarantees a growing shortage of virgins. That they cannot see the paradox in the position in which they place young women, and find themselves, remains one of the great conundrums in sexual culture. Moreover, the global influence of youth culture, despite an emphasis on romantic love (which might support waiting for marriage), increasingly validates a 'surrender to love' (as the Philippines report noted), as one of the new understandings and expectations of sexual activity available to young people today. In the face of the growing, if uneven, dissolution of virginity as a criterion of value, there is a powerful cry from young people in these reports for some clearer and less hypocritical guidance on this issue.

Nevertheless, there is still a widespread framing of young women's sexuality as an absence, or at least abstinence, in all countries studied. There is considerably more attention paid to preparing young women for their (hopefully delayed) reproductive roles. Striking in the country reports is the level of energy put into explaining to young women the ins and outs of menstruation and reproduction. There were certainly findings in many country reports that this education was

often patchy and partial, delayed or deferred, and generally inadequate. Certainly, little is said about sex or sexual pleasure, and many country reports noted a breakdown in traditional methods of educating young women in these issues — from seclusion, the guardianship of various female kin, to the guarantees incorporated in bride prices or dowries. A repeated theme was the failure of the often presumed central relationship between mothers and daughters as a source of education about young women's bodies and sexuality. Some country reports (Cameroon, Zimbabwe, Papua New Guinea) noted traditional taboos operating for this issue as well as other, more modern, pressures increasing the difficulty.

Yet, even more striking was the almost complete absence of any similar, formal, educational processes for young men. Physical responses to male puberty — inexplicable body growth, unsightly secondary sex characteristics, unexpected and untimely erections, perplexing first ejaculations, the unanticipated sensations and consequences of sexual activity — were experienced by all young men in an absence of information other than from peers and siblings. The encouragement of boys to be sexually active is doubly endowed with a desperate quest for knowledge and information in the face of silence about their sexuality. This is the double bind for young men that then intersects that for young women, noted above, and produces sexual confusion and distress. Families emerge as almost peripheral to the process whereby young men obtain any information or learn to understand their bodies and sexuality. Fathers appear irrelevant to the process, passing their responsibility to

older sons, sex workers or pornography, and ultimately entrusting their son's sexual progress to happenstance, peer-based mythology and their own adventuring — a potent mix of omission and error.

There are various versions of this same story in all country reports, which indicate that neither sex is adequately prepared by its older mentors for a confident sexuality. Yet there is evidence of a growing discourse on young women's sexuality that is productive, not merely reproductive, and speaks positively of women's sexual desire in terms approaching the notion of a sexual drive not dissimilar to the more common hydraulic notion of young men's irrepressible sexual instincts. In Papua New Guinea young women talked of their body responses to sex and to pleasure (*kisim piling* or getting feelings), which contrasted with older women's sense of sex as duty or forbearance. Young Cambodian women understand the notion of *ruam lob* (sex for pleasure) and offered at times graphic accounts of their sexual arousal and desire, although sex for pleasure is less practised among young women than young men. Even young men in Cambodia recognize desire and arousal in young women in the phrase *ormuol khiloun* (bend and roll like a rat). Young women from Costa Rica and Chile, particularly from the middle-class parts of those samples, reported a loosening of constraint in regard to premarital sex (Costa Rica) and casual sexual encounters (Chile), with notions of female arousal and desire informing this changing sexual order. Importantly, young people in the Philippines report a coming-together of bodies within relation-

ships that acknowledges pleasure for both before marriage.

In young people's comments there is sometimes a distinct sense that changes in these understandings of sexual pleasure are patchy and often offered in defence of sexual 'indiscretions', loss of virginity, and distance travelled from traditional practices. Yet here again, the Cameroon report noted that sex was not regarded as bad or unnatural traditionally, and in some places young women were once prepared for and initiated into sex immediately post-puberty by female kin organizing a young male partner to assess her readiness. That said, the extent of this current renovation should not be overstated, having been most noticeable among young, middle-class Costa Rican and Chilean women, responding in part to a long-standing engagement with Western feminism in their countries.

Some country reports noted a good deal of confusion among some young men as a result of the change in young women's sexual interests and expectations. This confusion appears similar to the 'crisis' in masculinity in the West. The Chile report noted a crisis in *machista* culture, premised as it is on sexual adventuring, initiation and conquest, brought about partly in response to young women's new sexual assertiveness and a rupture in the salience of virginity. The Costa Rica study found evidence of some accommodation among young men to this change in sexual roles at the level of gender roles (e.g., doing more housework, defending women's right to work), but prevailing discourses of 'good/bad' women, men's 'natural' sexual assertiveness, and women's 'natural' inclination to marriage and

child-bearing have barely been dented. A more disturbing finding from Papua New Guinea noted that the developing of young women's desire and sexual interests, in conjunction with the ascendancy of the cash economy, has left young men, many of whom are unemployed, without the cash to pay for sex in a society where sex in exchange for goods or favours has a long, traditional, if rapidly transforming, cultural pattern. One response to being cut out of this rapidly emerging sexual economy was a widespread, rationalized resort to rape.

These studies were not quantitative in nature and cannot apportion this experience of coerced sex to any percentage of young women (or men) with confidence, but that does not diminish the seriousness of the issue and the necessity for programmes and interventions to minimize this very serious threat to sexual health. The widespread experience of coerced sexual activity among young women noted in many country reports is gravely distressing. The most graphic account of the institutionalization of rape and also pack rape of young women was, undoubtedly, reported in the Papua New Guinea study. There, the suggestion of a connection between traditional definitions of gender and sexuality should not render the experiences of Papua New Guinean women as exotic. The Papua New Guinea report argues that something more profound is occurring — a change in sexual culture that is registering pressures and distresses from larger social forces, such as economic modernization.

The data in other country reports, and the upsurge in reports of sexual

assault, pack and date rape, rape in marriage, incest and sexual abuse, and rape of men in the West signify a larger, similar arena of crisis. The studies conducted here do not attempt an explanation for that larger crisis; nor can this comparative report. But, combined, the disturbing evidence of coercion in sex in these reports warrants an urgent, considered inclusion of this issue in any conception of sexual health and HIV/STD prevention.

This overview of young people's sexual culture has highlighted already a set of tensions in the gender differentiated patterning of young people's sexuality, with quite common patterns emerging in all countries, if in different ways. These tensions are influenced by longstanding or traditional gender differentials, themselves under pressure. There are both encouraging findings and disturbing consequences at the level of young people's sexual culture, of the destabilization of traditional understandings of sex and sexuality, and of the impact of gender on sexuality. It is important to note that these findings reveal processes of both *destruction* and *construction*, not merely some descent into chaos. Change is occurring in sexual cultures in all the countries studied with uneven effects and at various paces. There is a strong sense of young people being at times somewhat rudderless, yet also active in creating new meanings and giving themselves often quite adequate directions. The glaring omission in this active response to change is young people's distinct lack of understanding beyond the personal, interpersonal and milieu levels of the impact of large-scale social change on their sexual conduct. One of the greatest dangers young people face, and one of the great disservices we do

them, is to reinforce the delusion that sexuality is an individual, freely chosen or merely interpersonal experience. Fostering an awareness of the structural, larger, socioeconomic forces that impact upon sexual conduct in all societies may prove to be a more rounded context for helping young people assess their risk in the face of HIV/AIDS. In other words, sexual and drug-related safeties may amount to knowing not just the rules of a game, but also the arena in which it is to be played.

Modernization

Social and economic development and modernization do not simply change the day-to-day conditions and circumstances in which people find themselves. They also affect personal and interpersonal life at the level of the body, the sexual development of the self, and understandings of desire and pleasure, and expectations of both. All studies reported the marked effects of economic modernization and the pressures caused, in particular, by rural transformation and increased urbanization. In addition to the changes at the personal level listed above, these pressures assist, among other things, in providing the infrastructure (bigger cities, bars and clubs, gymnasiums, etc.) for greater sexual opportunity among young people (and adults as well). Modernization brings with it new understandings and ideas to justify how life might be lived differently from traditional ways. These understandings and ideas facilitate sexual experimentation and the breaking of traditional sexual rules.

The Cameroon study in particular noted how urbanization had undone the patterns of exogamy that pre-

vailed in traditional village life. A significant increase was reported in the range and number of sexual partners now living in close proximity. Simple changes, like the arrival of a road or highway, vastly increase the sexual traffic as well. This was noted in Papua New Guinea and Zimbabwe, partly through the arrival of outsiders (truck drivers, military personnel) but also by encouraging settlement at points on the roads as well. In Zimbabwe, the growth of the dormitory town of Mbare, both as a result of previous colonial government's policies of racial separation, but also as a result of more recent migration to the economic opportunities seemingly offered by Harare, has led to a new sexual culture in its own right. Here, new patterns of sex work, an intensity in habitation leading to losses of privacy, and an expanding number of commercial entertainment venues provide increased sexual opportunity. This, at one level, may seem unproblematic, but it clearly provides a fertile ecology for increased sexual activity, increased numbers of partners and the increased likelihood of STDs.

With this kind of mobility and urbanization comes a kind of new sexual infrastructure in the form of bars, discothèques, and other venues. The Zimbabwe study also noted the development of similar infrastructure around coach terminals. This infrastructural provision not only applies to large urban centres. The Papua New Guinea study, for example, noted the existence of similar venues on a small scale at village level and suggested a direct link between such venues and pack rape. The dramatic rise of bars and similar establishments after the arrival of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia

(UNTAC) in 1992 greatly increased the opportunities for young women to pursue a social life with acknowledged sexual aspects (e.g., as bar girls), beyond that previously available. In Chile, the 'party' ethnography in a discothèque pointed to the similarly important place of new social venues, in this case a sophisticated discothèque that encouraged, facilitated and legitimated seduction.

A discussion of the importance of spaces for young people is presented later, but it is important here to note the increasing size and availability of commercial infrastructure and its impact on the changing patterns of sexual engagement for young people. The significance of this escalation in commercial infrastructure has yet to be adequately recognized in HIV/STD prevention strategies.

In Papua New Guinea, modernization has produced dubious benefits as the economic gains made in the past 50 years are destabilizing just as the HIV epidemic is increasing rapidly. The net effect of the dramatic shift to a cash economy has in part transformed many traditional patterns of exchanging sex for goods (and the more enduring exchange of bride price in marriage) to the point of increased participation of women and men in a kind of commercially organized sex work. Sex can be traded for cash, and since cash is hard to come by for young people, this has led to an increase in both female and male sex work.

The impact of economic development was not confined to countries such as Zimbabwe, Papua New Guinea and Cameroon. Costa Rica reported uneven effects of economic develop-

ment in its comparative analysis of two sites, 'Villa del Mar' and 'Villa del Sol'. 'Villa del Mar' is a small, marginal, largely working-class town with a deteriorating economic base and high levels of unemployment and underemployment. 'Villa del Sol' is an inlying suburb of San José with a modern middle-class culture and brighter economic prospects for its well-educated young people. There were notable differences between young people in these two sites in relation to decision-making about sexual activity, education and prospective professional imperatives, notions of sexual rights, such as monogamy, virginity and sexual initiative, and in understandings of sexuality, which were definitely related to access to educational resources and other social and cultural capital. In Chile, similar striking differences were found between middle-class students and young workers, and that research team was even motivated to add a third sector to their sample, 'the inactives', to register the significant differences in sexual activity and understandings found among these impoverished young people on the fringes of the youth labour market, with scant education and few foreseeable life prospects. In Zimbabwe, this differential impact of economic development was noted among more affluent high-school students from a middle-class area of Harare, where there was some evidence of young women delaying vaginal intercourse based on their judgements about their social and economic prospects.

Recognizing the socially stratified effects of modernization on sexual activity and culture is not a simple or obvious task. All country reports stress — as a result of the differentiation noted, among other things, in

social and economic terms — the need to disassemble the singularity of the term 'young people'. All reports noted the significant differences among the young people in and between the various sites studied. These differences were not merely the product of the research design, for no country used the same axes of comparison except for gender. In other words, these patterns of differentiation are likely to be readily translatable from country to country. In utilizing the social class differential used in Costa Rica, the Philippines, Zimbabwe and Chile in Cameroon, Cambodia or Papua New Guinea, similar patterns of difference might be found; alternatively, employing the rural/urban site selection used in Papua New Guinea and Zimbabwe in Chile and Costa Rica would throw light on different patterns of differentiation there as well. One conclusion to be drawn from this study is that any simplistic characterization of young people as a singular homogeneous population is a serious error of judgment if it dominates the design of health promotion and HIV/STD public health programmes. The recommendation from all country reports, that single nation-wide approaches to prevention education are inappropriate, and that local, context-specific health promotion is by far the preferable strategy, is highly significant.

When the middle-class sections of the samples in these studies are set aside, a common feature for all other young people is their wretched socioeconomic situation, facing non-existent or degraded youth labour markets, poor prospects for education and training, and little social support at community level. The

Costa Rica study argues that it should come as no surprise that young people's bodies become their only resource in these circumstances, and the pursuit of sex remains one area of activity in which success, pleasure, self-worth and emotional depth are experienced. The importance of sex to young people in the face of such unyielding socioeconomic marginalization can never be overstated.

Urban, rural and provincial aspects

Migration to urban areas is not a new phenomenon, but the Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Papua New Guinea and Cambodia country reports all commented on this issue and noted the significance of urban/rural differences. Papua New Guinea in particular reported circular forms of migration with relatively frequent movements between village, town, city and back, rather than the semi-permanent form noted in Cameroon, or the seasonal movements noted in Zimbabwe, linked to harvesting, mining and other forms of seasonal work.

These different forms of migration have a number of consequences. First, there is a marked weakening of traditional ties with family, with kin and with traditional sexual cultures. A second consequence is the enhanced availability of sexual partners (noted above). The third is the expansion of various kinds of sex for favours and other types of informal exchanges, in addition to the institutionalization of various patterns of more directly commercial sex work. Cameroon in particular reported periodic sex work tied to wage payments as a feature of this form of migration, with influxes of young women to towns or other sites where men migrate in search of work.

Other effects of larger social forces

All the reports indicate the impact of larger social forces. Development and cultural tensions, immediate histories, or processes of modernization are not simply context as 'backdrop', but context as 'structure'. If we research sexuality without reference to these larger forces, but simply at the level of individual or even aggregated group behaviour, we shall fail to understand the motivation for sex. We shall also fail to see the constraints and enabling dimensions of these larger forces underlying sexual culture and its changing emphases and importance not only for young people but for all sectors of society. HIV/STD prevention cannot ignore these larger forces. They are the constituents and determinants of health as much as individual behaviour is. There is a need to move beyond a narrowly behavioural model of health and individual risk to take seriously the broader structural understanding of vulnerability (through class distinction, race, gender, age, socioeconomic opportunity, social and cultural factors) reported here.

Comparisons

We will now look at those aspects of young people's sexuality that have implications for the design of future prevention efforts. The main comparative frameworks that emerged from the country reports were as follows: the impact of dominant sexuality frameworks; onset of sexuality activity; the centrality of bodies; mass media; space; HIV risk assessment, condom use and ideas on safer sex.

The impact of dominant understandings of sexuality

All country reports recognized that dominant understandings of sexuality emanating from the churches, the state and its laws, and from medicine and public health, are still powerful in shaping sexual understandings and, sometimes, activity among young people. They do so, however, in ways that often conflict with young people's experience and expectations of sex itself. Strong concern was also expressed by a number of research teams at the apparent failure of these dominant understandings, first, to grasp the complexity of young people's sexual culture and, second, to comprehend the impact of that reality on HIV/AIDS.

Churches were singled out in Costa Rica, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Cameroon for their failure to endorse condom use as an HIV/STD prevention strategy in those countries. The Cambodia report noted the need for a stronger and more active role for the dominant Buddhist religion in similar terms. These are not simply anti-religious calls for action on the part of the research teams; they are grounded directly in the empirical evidence in these studies that young people's sexual lives and sexual culture have been transformed in ways that are deep and complex, and that such change will continue. Exhortations to abstinence and celibacy, fidelity or delayed sexual activity, or to return to 'traditional' sexual transactions will definitely be disregarded, ignored, brushed aside or transcended by young people under the pres-

ures of modernization, the internationalization of youth culture, and the clearly proven sense of legitimate 'ownership' of sexuality that young people claimed in all countries studied.

The Cambodia report in particular urged key adults working with young Cambodians not to continue to use myths about sexuality drawn from their own experience alone, or from a Cambodia of a near-mythical past. The dramatic and often tragic recent history of that country demands a recognition of a deep and immutable transformation in sexual life, the report argues, requiring a somewhat hard-nosed approach to present dangers rather than a reliance on a kind of romanticized Khmer history. This argument about working with the present offers advice of value beyond the boundaries of that particular country.

A third area where dominant understandings are not applicable to the current sexual conduct of young people is in relation to same-sex activity. The *General Research Protocol* of the study did not direct country research teams to explore this issue. Those research teams that pursued the issue found it relevant to their design or salient to their analysis as fieldwork progressed. The findings indicate that many young men (and some young women) in all countries are willing to try, and find pleasure in, same-sex activity. It is also clear that the definition of these activities within the Western model of 'heterosexuality'/'homosexuality'⁹ is culturally inapplicable to most countries, and confounds prevention efforts on this issue.

9 Often read as 'majority'/'minority'

In circumstances where these dominant understandings might offer adequate and accurate guidance and information about sexual matters including HIV/AIDS and STDs to young people, most notably in schools and other educational institutions, all country reports bemoan the inadequacy of available programmes. Either these are restricted to the biologicistic or the moralistic, or glaring in their omissions (e.g., women's sexual pleasure and same-sex activity) or partiality (e.g., sex equals reproduction). Indeed, the Costa Rica report notes that young people are often left to survive on myth, 'magic' and muddled thinking instead of clear scientific information about human sexuality. Other countries reported similar, often wildly inaccurate, ideas about sex and the body used by young people in their efforts to make sense of what is happening in their lives. Although some of these ideas can be dressed up as alternative explanations or local traditions and understandings, many others are just myth, as a close reading of the individual country reports reveals.

Onset of sexuality activity

The great variation in ages for onset of sexual activity confirms previous findings that there can be no generalized starting point for young people's introduction to sexual activity based on the arbitrary distinction of young people as a universal category or age cohort (Cleland & Ferry, 1995). Also, the seemingly accidental initiation into sex in most young people's accounts must be interpreted as complex culturally specific moments, which will necessitate a significant rethinking of prevention education among the presexual.

For example, not only do peers, particularly male peers, provide a social arena for experimentation and encouragement for initiating sexual activities, with girlfriends or boyfriends, sex workers or in group sex, but young people also provide each other with special words, phrases and a quite sophisticated sexual discourse to employ in pursuing, enacting and understanding their sexual conduct. This discourse, documented particularly well in the Philippines study for example (and offering a strong argument for the research method employed), is in fact a powerful structuring of sexual experience, in a sense providing an already well-trodden, culturally specific path toward sex rather than away from it. Not all young people follow that path to premarital sex — there are consistent, if few, accounts of restraint in all country reports — but the prevailing sexual culture of young people in this study seems to be increasingly moving toward a wide acceptance of premarital sex. This acceptance is similar to the rapid changes in young people's sexual conduct in the West following the evocatively misnamed 'permissiveness' of the 1960s and the invention of the contraceptive pill.

Embodiment

One of the richest sets of material obtained by the country research teams concerned the body's responses to sexual activity. This is an area of sexuality research that is often ignored empirically and yet is crucial to understanding the experience of sex. Young people in most country studies talked of the experiences of their bodies, the sensations of arousal, ejaculation, orgasm, pain, pleasure, and the physicality of the partner's

body and their own in the midst of sex. There are quite honest accounts in some studies of the sensations of various practices such as masturbation, first penetration (vaginal and anal), oral sex, and group sex that are encountered by young people in a completely unprepared state. Not only are the basic knowledges about sex and reproduction quite often absent from the understandings, meanings and ideas young people bring to their growing sexual desires, but their bodies once engaged in sex reveal what they have not been told or prepared for at the level of physical actions and responses.

This should be of vital concern to sex educators and health promotion professionals. In the absence of any adequate information about the nature of the body's capacity for sexual arousal and response, simple information about the mechanics of sex becomes lost, forgotten or irrelevant when sex is actually happening. The dangers here for HIV/STD transmission are obvious. Getting 'carried away' is shorthand for the physical responses in sex overwhelming judgement, and this warrants an inclusion of explicit information on the body-in-sex in preparing young people for the sexual lives they are exploring. The absence of such information will inevitably mean that the body's sensations alone will lead young people toward pleasures that will not be denied.

Mass media

Wider social and economic forces in each country are certainly altering sexual possibilities for young people, but in ways largely invisible to daily experience. One simple example here

concerns the impact of new media technologies, such as videotapes and magazines, which in a number of country reports were listed as sources of information on sex for young people. These are sources of information valued by young people. Various countries reported the impact of 'romance' literature, popular music, film and the like, and it is important to note that although pornography was more readily available through these new technologies, not all such material enjoyed by young people was pornographic. Care should be taken to record the differential impacts of new technologies and the type of messages they disseminate. Increased access to globalizing technologies is not just going to affect young people in developing countries, but everywhere, and adults will not remain untouched by these developments either.

Space

The country reports all register the importance of space to young people, not only as places where the social interaction that precedes sex occurs, but also in relation to the real possibilities for sexual activity such spaces create, and in which young people often create specifically sexual opportunities. The most dramatic example of this was offered in Chile's ethnographic account of 'parties' and 'partying'. This account focused on the significant difference between peer-organized, informal, social events that offer space in private homes for getting together, drinking, listening and dancing to music, flirting and maybe having sex, and a more formal space created by the discothèque, where young people rely less on couples and peers, where music and dancing are

erotically enhanced by a deliberately designed atmosphere, and young people are able to pursue almost anonymously a more casual kind of sexual encounter. There may even be sections of such venues that facilitate preliminary sexual activity. This is not an unfamiliar scenario in any major city in the world today, and such venues in some countries are governed by various laws on alcohol and drug use or rules of proper sexual behaviour in public. But the Chile example warns that any reading of the idea of 'sex-on-premises' venues as being simply restricted to brothels, massage parlours, bathhouses and the like, is clearly mistaken. And the idea that all such venues are 'adult-only' spaces is no longer sustainable.

Even if some of these places can be regulated in some way by laws or rules of public behaviour, not all can. In Papua New Guinea, it is clear that many dance halls and related alcohol or drug use are rarely policed or policeable. The attendant sexual activity noted in the Papua New Guinea report, including significant amounts of sex for cash or favours, group sex and rape, is directly facilitated for young people specifically in such spaces. In Cambodia, places such as Khren Sray (a recreational resort on the river outside Phnom Penh) are well known and understood to be sites of seduction and lovemaking — not just for the young at heart. There is a kind of humorous and tolerant acceptance of the existence of such spaces, for Cambodian culture is not anti-sex.

Beyond such recreation spaces there are also the specific sectors of cities and towns set aside for sex work encounters, and for young men par-

ticularly these spaces grant licence in a way not permitted with girlfriends. The Cambodia report is again instructive on this issue. It notes the possibility of more varied sexual practices with sex workers, including anal intercourse and group sex, and a very important distinction being made by young men between sex workers (most often Vietnamese women), what is permitted sexually with them, and how they are treated and regarded. The 'good/bad' ('virgin/whore', 'Madonna/Magdalen') distinction, used against sexually active women and noted in most countries, is doubly cruel when it is linked to forms of racial or ethnic distinction. The mythology in Cameroon that Pygmy women must be forced to have sex is a similar example.

The common acceptance of, and often outright support for, young men using the services of sex workers and going, often in groups, to visit the places set aside for them, create a reasonably observable sexual space. More readily observable, but less understood, is ordinary street life read as erotic space. The Costa Rica research team effectively used street observation to uncover the eroticism of the street, and their report argues that street life is crucial to young people's sexuality, particularly poorer young people. In the street, young men (who often and usually have more freedom to traverse such spaces than young women) meet peers, older men, homosexuals, sex workers and potential sex partners. They see seduction and sometimes even sex acts. Spaces for sex to occur — parks, beaches, alleys, in cars, behind fences — become inducements, enhancements, adding *frisson* (as the Costa Rica report argues) to the illicit, turn-

ing sexual adventuring into a repudiation of the private and narrowly approved kind of sex young people are expected and hoped eventually to pursue.

The central argument from this discussion of sexual space is that young people inhabit a number of differently structured spaces: spaces they create; spaces others create for them; spaces created for others but which young people traverse; spaces specifically for sex; spaces that are sexually charged. Indeed, it is clear that young people are not and cannot be quarantined from sexual spaces, unless adults are prepared to 'de-sexualise' the spaces they themselves currently enjoy — and that is highly unlikely to happen. Such spaces cannot be targeted for health promotion in uniform ways; they need thoughtful and appropriate techniques of intervention. Developing interventions for these non-institutional and informal sexual spaces will require more grounded and localized approaches than can be achieved in the formal curriculum of a sex education programme for instance, or for that matter in large-scale, mass-media campaigns. Young people themselves are vital to the development of such programmes geared to informal sexual spaces, for without their guidance and disclosure adults will be refused access to these carefully guarded secrets.

HIV risk assessment, condom use and ideas on safer sex

All reports revealed a marked convergence in actual risk-taking among young people, even in the context of significant and serious consideration by young people of safety and risk. It

is clear that HIV itself is not sufficiently prioritized to override other considerations in relation to young people's sexual expression. This conclusion warrants more respectful consideration in any rethinking about the character of young people's risk assessment.

There is clearly strong evidence that many young people have dangerously poor levels of knowledge about HIV and STDs, and some countries have evidence from previous studies of high levels of risk-taking, e.g., Papua New Guinea, Costa Rica, the Philippines. These poor levels of knowledge and worrying levels of risk-taking are not uniformly spread across all samples of young people studied, demanding again that the simplistic declaration of all young people being 'at-risk' by definition, simply because they are young, be set aside for a more sophisticated recognition of the social and cultural contexts in which risk is constituted. For example, the Papua New Guinea report noted that condoms are very favourably accepted by young people there; how to access and distribute them in the context of a rapidly deteriorating public health system is the real problem. Social marketing of condoms needs a strategy in this context quite different from that employed in places where condoms are readily available but not used (Philippines), or disliked for their interference with *machista* concepts of sexuality such as in Chile.

Conclusions

The similarities between countries involved in this study provide compelling evidence of a complex and heterogeneous situation for young

people that can be generalized to many other countries on reflection and with due care. There is little to be gained in developing HIV/STD programmes among young people from homogeneous, simplistic, universalizing and deeply romanticized visions of young people as one inevitably at-risk population. *There really is no one population called 'young people' and no one strategy to be developed to provide for them.* Naïve understandings or any oversimplification of the complexities underlying terms such as 'vulnerability' or 'at-risk' can easily lead these to become catch-all clichés that distort rather than assist our understanding of the situations in which young people find themselves in relation to sexual health. It is far more useful to pursue the understanding of young people's sexual behaviour in the context of their immediate peers and surroundings. There, we must take into account local cultural forms and expectations of sex. We must also include the physical attractions and sensations of sex, and must reckon with any dispute between all of this and the dominant understandings of sexuality that would appear largely to fail to inhibit or alter young people's interest in sex and sexual relationships. But we must also not forget the larger, socio-economic contexts implicated in the potentials in, and constraints upon, young people's daily lives. Sex

becomes much more meaningful, sought-after and even legitimate in the face of a rapidly changing but uncertain world.

This rethinking of our understanding of young people's sexuality requires a shift in emphasis from the merely behavioural and descriptive, to the more sociocultural and interactionist. Young people's sexual conduct needs to be understood as directly related to the quality of their relationships with each other and the place sex has in developing those relationships. The daily social life of young people is deeply bound up with sex acts and sexual meanings. This interpretation requires that we reject notions of young people as victims, as passive, as vulnerable lost souls on the brink of self-destruction (pervasive ideas about them). We need to recognize the rich resources that young people actively draw upon, create and then bring to their own sexual pursuits and interests. It is only by recognizing young people's capacity to act on their own behalf that we will be able to develop a realistic understanding of their sexual lives. This understanding will provide the most effective and reliable stance from which to work with young people to help them develop active ownership of their health and, consequently, to take responsibility for managing their own HIV/STD risk.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The country reports contain a number of recommendations for the specific countries that took part in the Contextual Factors study, and many of these offer useful ideas to other countries as well. These individual country recommendations will not be presented here; they are available in the full country reports and are noted in the country summaries in the Appendix to this report. Instead, we will concentrate on key themes and issues of relevance to those involved in programme development and implementation with and for young people under the following headings: conceptual leadership; programmatic responses; gender; dissemination; and research.

Conceptual leadership

The similarities and comparisons discussed in Chapter 4 offer new starting points for rethinking issues related to young people, HIV/AIDS and sexual health. They promote a more sophisticated understanding of sexuality and social relationships, which contextualizes sexual practices and relations with their meanings and intentions, their origins and foundations, and includes their capacity to transform culture. This kind of understanding of young people's sexual conduct is more immediately useful, more easily apprehended, and more directly translatable into programmatic responses than descriptive statistics of sexual practices, social epidemiological modelling of risk-taking, or standard discourses of young people's vulnerability.

In the light of this, we urgently need to shift the frame of reference from the hitherto naïve and simplistic representations of young people and HIV/AIDS toward this more sophisticated and directly useful framework. The starting point is a significant reworking of the concept of vulnerability and a prioritizing of young people in relation to risk-in-context, as distinct from merely as 'at-risk' by definition.

Programmatic responses

A marked upgrading of effort in HIV/AIDS prevention and sexual health promotion among young people is also needed. This means introducing, developing and upgrading of sex education programmes in educational institutions. This requires distinctively educational expertise, different from that of medical or health promotion professionals, and will involve including new bodies of expertise from the educational specialities (curriculum development specialists, teacher trainers, classroom materials producers, pedagogy evaluators, community and adult educationalists, those skilled in school management, and so on). The intellectual discipline and professional field of education is large and specialized, with enormous resources for enhancing countries' responses to HIV/AIDS. The formal education sector, intellectually and professionally, has mostly been ignored in the narrow definition of health that presides in most countries and in many international responses to date.

Young people in these studies value any information they have received

from their schools and university-based programmes, despite the fact that they regard it as woefully inadequate most of the time. The willingness of young people to engage in formal sex education (governmental and religious opposition notwithstanding) is a tremendous resource not to be wasted. There is important international work to be done developing generic frameworks for HIV/STD sex education at various institutional levels. These clearly need to outline the coverage of human sexuality to be addressed and the undeniable need for basic information on HIV/STD prevention, such as condom use.

Providing technical educational guidance in the development of sex education programmes will require more than a shift in expertise toward educationalists; it requires tackling those quite powerful discourses and institutions that refuse young people respectful recognition of their sexual reality. Condom use is very patchy among young people, and premarital pregnancy would appear on the rise in most countries in this study. Encouraging condom use by young people cannot be other than a first priority. Health promotion that ignores the realities of an authentic sexuality for young people and thereby denies them adequate access to condoms is condemning them to enhanced HIV/STD risk and rising rates of premarital pregnancy at younger ages.

Parents are struggling to deal adequately with the rapidly changing sexual culture of young people. Traditional forms of sexual training are often partial or no longer working, and larger socioeconomic forces are

often destabilizing whatever capacity families have to deal with their sexually maturing offspring. There is a need for programmes of support for adults who work with young people, including families, to take advantage of the declared willingness of young people to learn and their desire for assistance revealed in these studies. Simply reinforcing traditional educational relationships will not work; new approaches are needed and this may require further research, but there is a valuable health promotion resource available in both the concern of adults and the willingness of young people at least to listen to and hope for information from those adults.

Many young people in developing countries are not in educational institutions and even more are not in the workforce. Out-of-school health promotion is therefore a priority. Ethnographic research methods can be of value in needs assessment, local area assessments, in the observation of local sexual cultures (spaces, processes, language and intrigues), in the rapid assessment of sexual networks, and so on. There is a need for skills training for those working with young people out-of-school to assist them to obtain efficiently, and utilize effectively, the kinds of information gained.

Gender

Renewed focus is needed on the enhanced risk many young women face with reference to HIV/STD, noted in every country report in the Contextual Factors study, and confirmed by other recent research from the International Center for Research on Women (Weiss, Whelan & Gupta, 1996). The growing practice of

exchanging sex for cash, goods or favours; the increase in intermittent sex work related to (sometimes transient) economic need and migration; an increasing recognition of women's sexual pleasure; the widespread and undeniable experience of young women of coerced sex; the impact of globalizing sexual cultures: these are as much an urgent part of the HIV/STD agenda as is condom promotion and sex education. Young women are not, by definition, merely 'vulnerable', they are actively engaged in the production of their sexual cultures, albeit with fewer culturally approved ways of controlling their own bodies and exploring their own desires than men. Yet, there is solid evidence in this study, particularly from young women in Papua New Guinea and Cambodia, which indicates that it is foolish to ignore young women's active pursuit of sexual interests and pleasures. Young women in Chile, embracing their desire for occasional or casual sexual encounters, are clearly determined that they are not to be regarded as wayward, wicked or sexually loose, or in any other terms that have previously accompanied young women's premarital sexual activity. It is important also to note, for example, that young women in the Philippines and Zimbabwe regard young men's sexual attention and activity as necessary parts of developing sexual relations; lack of such attention is often read as serious lack of interest and threatens the development of the relationship toward marriage. There are many other instances in the findings of this study that indicate that any conceptualization of young women as sexual victims, and of their sexual experiences as unfortunate and inauthentic, will be soundly resisted by young

women themselves. There is a very positive image of young women's sexuality emerging from these studies, and it must be respected.

But gender does not simply equate with women; it concerns men as well. It is clear from every country studied that young men are sadly neglected by families and societies when it comes to their sexuality and sexual development. For all their sexual activity, for all the instances of sexual distress and anguish they inflict on young women, young men pursue sex and are left to pursue sex and their understanding of it in almost total silence and the absence of support. It is not surprising therefore that they get it wrong so often. There is a clear need to demarcate a specific agenda for young men in addition to that for young women which is already established. Growing international interest in men's health, increasing evidence of poorer health outcomes for men in many countries, and evidence in these studies of marked same-sex and group-sex activity and increasing use of sex workers, argues for a speedy development of effort in this area. Young men's sexual health is not just about STDs and HIV prevention, or a focus on men as clients of sex workers; it is about recognizing the sexual needs of young men, their search for information about their desires, experiences and bodies, and the help they need in facing the impact of those same, larger, socio-economic forces that their female counterparts have to contend with. This argument is not a claim to equal time and equal space. It is a recognition that unless attention is paid to young men's sexuality, most efforts to help young women will be largely ineffective. The interdependence of the situations for both sexes is clearly revealed in these studies.

A final caution must be issued here: the owned, authentic and pursued sexual life of young people in these studies demands that attempts to intervene and assist them are not done at the expense of one sex for the other. Representing young men as 'predators' is as counterproductive as representing young women as 'victims'. Ultimately, the importance to young people of their sexual lives and relationships with each other will lead them to reject such representations and the health promotion messages accompanying them.

Dissemination

Some of the findings of the various country reports in the Contextual Factors study are country-specific and are not generalizable in any conventional research sense. But each is instructive both methodologically and substantively. There is significant utility to be gained by disseminating these findings to ministries of health, ministries of education, national AIDS programmes, peak and local non-governmental and community-based health promotion organizations, HIV/AIDS resource centres, and to community educators themselves. Education departments responsible for sex education, personal development programmes and the like will also be a receptive audience for these findings, as are professionals and volunteers working with out-of-school young people. Researchers too will benefit from understanding the utility of the methodologies used by the various country research teams in this study.

There has been significant and ongoing criticism of HIV/AIDS research in many developed and developing

countries for its lack of foresight in relation to dissemination of findings and their implementation within programmes. Within the countries involved in this study, it would be a great shame not to see the findings widely discussed and implemented.

Research

The findings from these seven countries and the comparative analysis reveal the strength of this kind of research in getting to the heart of complex social problems that compound the impact of HIV/AIDS. A simple example of this is the qualitative difference in utility and depth between survey findings on frequencies of unsafe sexual practices and the notion of sexual cultures explored in these studies. Although the former focuses attention on patterns of risk-taking and potential population targets, the latter is more able to offer people developing interventions the wherewithal to generate them. Thus, the methodologies are not (and have never been) in competition; they complement each other in very important ways and both are needed to provide proper research advice.

It might be argued that many countries, however, do not have these research capacities and few would be able to undertake research of the complexity of this study. Yet, even though the research teams who undertook this study were not all experienced in qualitative research methodology, the research process itself provided remarkable training in new skills and the consolidation of existing skills for all teams. The theoretical shifts were also significant. The findings of the country reports clearly indicate the sophistication of these

teams and the work they undertook. This argues for the development of programmes of in-country research that include components for strengthening research capacity. Close-focus research is ideally suited to this purpose and, as the findings of this study reveal, also offer rich materials for immediate use in developing programmes for the target populations.

Part of the Contextual Factors study's success is due also to the overall design of the project, from the development of the *General Research Protocol* (which held up remarkably well as the ground work for all the studies), through the technical support provided at a number of stages in-country and from Geneva, to detailed guidance for the writing of

final reports. This suggests the development of social research models that combine clear research design principles, methodological innovation, and flexible research management and support techniques. It is important not to set research priorities on the basis of pressing research concerns or issues alone; there is as much to be gained by stimulating and developing social research 'processes' and relationships as there is in concentrating on 'content' and research agendas. The spin-off from this approach is considerable in terms of in-country research planning, resource allocation and capacity strengthening, and increases the focus on health promotion as a research-informed activity, both for prevention and for health management for people with HIV and AIDS.

COUNTRY REPORTS

Abega S-C (1996) *Learning and the real life experience of sexuality among young Cameroonians aged from 15 to 30*. University of Yaoundé I, Yaoundé, Cameroon.

Contact Dr Séverin-Cécile Abega, Faculty of Social Sciences of the Catholic University of Yaoundé, BP 11, Yaoundé, Cameroon.

Jenkins C (1996) *Report on youth, urbanisation and sexuality in Papua New Guinea*. Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research, Goroka, Papua New Guinea.

Contact Dr Carol Jenkins, Section Coordinator Health and Population, CARE Bangladesh, Rd 7/A, Hse No. 60, Dhanmondi, Dhaka 1209, Bangladesh.

Marshall MT, Canales M, Lopez G & Scombich X (1995) *Chile: youth, culture and sexual behaviour*. Corporación de Salud y Políticas Sociales (CORSAPS), Santiago, Chile.

Contact Dr Maria Teresa Marshall, Universidad Católica Vicuña Mackenna, 4860 Campus San Joaquín Escuela de Trabajo Social, Santiago, Chile.

Runganga A (1996) *Social and contextual factors affecting risk-related sexual*

behaviour amongst young people in urban and rural Zimbabwe. University of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.

Contact Ms Agnes Runganga, Human Behaviour Research Centre, PO Box BW 1517, Borrowdale, Harare, Zimbabwe.

Schifter J, & Madrigal J (1996) *Sexual culture and rebellion in Costa Rican youth: impact on the risk of HIV/AIDS infection*. Instituto Latinoamericano de Prevención y Educación en Salud, San José, Costa Rica.

Contact Dr Jacobo Schifter, Director, ILPES, PO Box 561-1002, San José 1000, Costa Rica.

Tan ML, Batangan TU, Espanola HC, Guiang L, Quintilla L, Yacat J, Banaag R, Jusayan S & Heredia C (1996) *Contextual factors affecting risk-related sexual behavior among young adults in the Philippines*. Health Action Information Network, Quezon City, Philippines.

Contact Dr Michael Tan, Executive Director, Health Action Information Network, 9 Cabanatuan Road, Philam Homes, Quezon City 1104, Philippines.

Tarr, CM (1996) *People in Cambodia don't talk about sex, they simply do it!* University of Fine Arts, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Contact Dr Chou Meng Tarr, PO Box 1010, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

REFERENCES

- Bhende A (1993) *Evolving a model for AIDS prevention education among low-income adolescent girls in urban India*. International Center for Research on Women, Washington DC, Women and AIDS Research Program, September: 3 (Report-in-Brief).
- Binda ki Muaka P, Ndonda-Kumba R & Lufua-Mananga G (1993) Impact of HIV/AIDS educational programme on sexual behaviour of young students in harbour town of Boma, Zaire. *IX International Conference on AIDS, Berlin*, June (abst. no. PO-D14-3818).
- Campbell B & Mbizvo MT (1994) Sexual behaviour and HIV knowledge among adolescent boys in Zimbabwe. *Central African journal of medicine*, **40**(9),245-250.
- Castaneda X, Allen B & Castaneda I (1996) Migration, virginity and sexual initiation: factors associated with STD/AIDS risk perception among rural adolescents in Mexico, *IX International Conference on AIDS, Vancouver*, July (abstr. no. Tu.D.2703).
- Cleland J & Ferry B (eds.) (1995) *Sexual behaviour and AIDS in the developing world*. Taylor & Francis and World Health Organization, London.
- Domingo LJ (1995) *Youth under threat of HIV/AIDS. Young adult fertility and sexuality study II*, University of the Philippines, Population Institute, Quezon City, November.
- Egger M, Ferrie J, Gorter A, Gonzalez S, Gutierrez R, Pauw J & Smith GD (1993) HIV/AIDS-related knowledge, attitudes, and practices among Managuan secondary schools. *Bulletin of the Pan American Health Organization*, **27**(4),360-369.
- Feldman DA, O'Hara P, Baboo KS, Chitalu WN & Lu Y (1993) Sexual behavior among male adolescents in Zambian secondary schools. *IX International Conference on AIDS, Berlin*, July (abst. no. PO-D02-3433).
- Ford NJ & Kittisuksathit S (1994) Destinations unknown: the gender construction and changing nature of the sexual expressions of Thai youth. *AIDS Care*, **6**(5),517-531.
- Hammersley M & Atkinson P (1989) *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. Routledge, London & New York.
- Haworth A, Mataka EN, Muzizi L & Poulter C (1996) Religious beliefs and sexual behaviour of tertiary level students in Zambia. *XI International Conference on AIDS, Vancouver*, July (abstr. no. Th.C.4466).
- JOICEFP (1994) Gaining a clearer picture of youth behavior, Latin America. *JOICEFP news*, April, (238),4.
- Mulatu MS & Haile DN (1996) Sexual risk behaviour and condom use among Ethiopian high school adolescents. *IX International Conference on AIDS, Vancouver*, July (abstr. no. Mo.D.1692).
- Paiva V (1993) Sexuality, condom use and gender norms among Brazilian teenagers. *Reproductive health matters*, **2**,98-109.

- Pattaravanich U (1993) Effect of cultural factors on safer sexual behaviour among adolescents in Thailand. In: Ford N & Chamrathirong A, eds. *UK-Thai Collaborative Research Development in Reproductive and Sexual Health: Proceedings of the Symposium on the Mahidol-Exeter British Council Link*, Thailand, Mahidol University, Institute for Population and Social Research (IPSR), Nakornpathom, 73-83.
- Pattullo AL, Malonza M, Kimani GG, Muthee A, Otieno PA, Odhiambo K, Moses S & Plummer FA (1994) Survey of knowledge, behaviour and attitudes relating to HIV infection and AIDS among Kenyan secondary school students. *AIDS Care*, **6**(2),173-181.
- Raffaelli M, Campos R, Meritt AP, Siqueira E, Antunes CM, Parker R, Greco M, Greco D & Halsey N (1993) Sexual practices and attitudes of street youth in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. *Social science and medicine*, **37**(5),661-670.
- Richens J (1944) Sexually transmitted diseases in children in developing countries. *Genitourinary medicine*, **70**(4),278-283.
- Richter L & Swart-Kruger J (1996) AIDS risk of South African street children: the need for social and individual interventions. *XI International Conference on AIDS*, Vancouver, July, (Abstr. No. Th.D.4912).
- Ruiz J (1994) Street youth in Colombia: lifestyle, attitudes and knowledge. *AIDS health promotion exchange*, **1**,12-14.
- Teka T (1993) College students' attitudes and knowledge of AIDS. *Ethiopian medical journal*, **31**(4),233-237.
- Weiss E & Gupta RG (1996) Lessons learned from conducting sexuality research. *IX International Conference on AIDS*, Vancouver, July (abstr. no. Tu.D.2720).
- Weiss E, Whelan D & Gupta RG (1996) *Vulnerability and opportunity: adolescents and HIV/AIDS in the developing world*, International Center for Research on Women, Washington DC.
- Zimba RF (1995) Secondary school students' risks that may promote HIV infection and the spread of AIDS. *School psychology international*, **16**(1),67-78.