

DESIRE 2021

Digital Sexuality Education Conference Asia-Pacific

19-21 November 2021

20+ Sessions
30+ Speakers from 16+ countries

and lots more to come!

#YouthTalk

#DeepDive

#Desire2021

#CreatorsLab

#Dialogue4DSE

#CommunityCafé



DESIRE 2021 Conference Report

Digital Sexuality Education Conference Asia Pacific

19-21 November 2021

Held **Virtually**

Introduction

In response to the rapid uptake and utilization of digital platforms for young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR/SRH), a UN interagency team consisting of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at the Asia-Pacific Regional level with support from UNFPA Indonesia and Siklus Indonesia virtually convened digital sexuality education (DSE) creators, influencers, app developers, web designers, advocates, innovators and other relevant stakeholders in DESIRE 2021. Building on past regional studies and gatherings, through DESIRE 2021 the team aimed to facilitate partnership and learning through harnessing collective intelligence among the creators, and to further highlight young people's innovation and leadership in the relatively new field of DSE.

The event, one of the first of its kind, was designed to enable cross-sharing of up-to-date evidence and insights, as well as spark discussions about new, pertinent issues around the ever-changing field of DSE. The themes and issues covered in the conference program were crowdsourced from the creators themselves, ranging from how DSE can complement school-based comprehensive sexuality education, how to work with different content formats, rapid user testing, and other topics that are essential for creators to learn in order to produce quality DSE content and manage platforms effectively. The 3-day event consisted of plenary talk shows, parallel sessions, mini workshops, along with virtual exhibitions. This conference report summarizes the key messages and highlights of the DESIRE 2021 event.

Objectives of DESIRE 2021

- To provide a knowledge sharing platform to share the latest evidence, tools, resources and best practices related to DSE
- To strengthen engagements between the Asia-Pacific DSE community members and organizations, UN bodies, international NGOs, development partners, funders, media, the technology sector and other relevant stakeholders, and increase their support and commitment for DSE
- To build the capacity of the Asia-Pacific DSE community members in creating relevant and quality digital content and in managing digital platforms for DSE
- To highlight and bring visibility to the DSE community members and DSE issues in Asia-Pacific among regional authorities and the general public through stakeholder and media engagement

DESIRE 2021 in numbers

A snapshot of the conference in numbers:

3 days

20 sessions

42 booths

50 speakers from 19 countries, of which 47% are youth aged 30 and below

243 participants from 37 countries, of which 68% are youth aged 30 and below

List of abbreviations

- CSE: Comprehensive Sexuality Education
- DSE: Digital Sexuality Education
- FGDs: Focus Group Discussions
- FOMO: Fear of Missing Out
- HCD: Human-Centered Design
- HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus
- IT: Information Technology
- LGBTQIA+: Lesbian, Gender, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual
- SEO: Search Engine Optimization
- SRH: Sexual and Reproductive Health
- SRHR: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
- UI/UX: User Interface/User Experience

Key messages and insights

*Links to speakers' materials can be found in the "Relevant links" section on page [19](#)

Keeping up with Digital Sexuality Education: Latest research and reports in Asia-Pacific

Insights presented by:

- Maki Akiyama, Programme Analyst, Adolescents and Youth, [UNFPA Asia Pacific](#) for "My Body is My Body, My Life is My Life" report
- Kinza Hasan, [Women Deliver](#) for "Going Online for SRH" research
- Nur Handayani, [UNFPA Indonesia](#) Research Consultant for "How young people use digital platforms to make informed decisions on SRHR" research
- Samuel Olam, UNFPA Asia Pacific DSE Consultant for DSE skills mapping
- Moderator: June Low, [Good Sex Ed](#)

Due to the ever-evolving nature of digital spaces, the conference set out to share the latest research and reports related to DSE in the region, recognizing the importance of remaining up-to-date on the field's evidence base. In the panel, it was highlighted that there are [4 main ways that young people are currently using digital platforms](#) for SRHR-related issues:

- Creating, accessing and sharing SRH information
- Building communities and accessing SRH support
- Exploring sexual norms and sexual identity
- Forming and exploring intimate relationships

DSE creators can therefore consider how their platforms can support these four uses and help young people to do so safely. However, using digital platforms for SRH can also create [potential harms](#), summarized as the the 3Cs (Contact, Conduct and Content):

- Contact includes any harmful contact with adults, for instance online sexual grooming
- Conduct includes discrimination, cyberbullying, and non-consensual sharing of sexts
- Content includes unwelcome and harmful exposure to sexually explicit content and misinformation.

Aside from potential harms, a few key barriers that inhibit young people from accessing and using DSE platforms are stigma, concerns about privacy and confidentiality (particularly among young people using shared devices), low digital literacy, lack of accurate and evidence-based online SRH information, lack of trust in online SRH information, concerns about internet addiction and social media burnout, concerns about cyberbullying, and lack of internet access and data. It was noted that DSE creators should address these key barriers in order to enable young people to fully benefit from their platforms.

For instance, panelists recommended that DSE creators, aside from sharing SRH information, also provide digital literacy education, particularly on topics such as protecting privacy and identifying misinformation.



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The [DSE skills mapping](#), conducted through a review of previous reports and an online survey, resulted in a list of essential skills that DSE creators need, based on the DSE process flow and categorized into general skills (such as teamwork and communication) and more specific technical expertise domains. The process flow domain includes steps that DSE creators typically go through to create content and manage platforms, listed as the following:

- Developing relevant messages
- Packaging and delivering messages
- Evaluating success
- Building credibility
- Sustainability and resources mobilization
- Safeguarding users and creators
- Raising awareness for the platform
- Creating an enabling environment

Technical expertise domains include SRH technical expertise; social and behaviour change communications; digital media production; user interaction and engagement; digital marketing; law and policies, and others. This list of skills will provide a basis for future capacity building efforts for the DSE community, ensuring that DSE creators across the region are well-equipped to run their platforms successfully.



Promoting rights, safety and well-being in the digital space through DSE

Insights presented by:

- Agita Pasaribu, [Bully.id](#) Indonesia
- Maria Iqbal Shah, [Me4Myself](#) Asia-Pacific
- Baigalmaa Shura, [Strong Girls Strong Nation](#), Mongolia
- Debarati and Zahra Gabuji, Point of View Mumbai
- Moderator: Shannon Mathew, [The YP Foundation](#) India

Keeping in mind the various risks young people face when engaging online, it is important to consider how we can use DSE to safeguard and promote young people’s digital rights, safety and well-being. Panelists emphasized that digital rights are human rights in the digital space, and should be protected as such.

They pointed out the key role that DSE creators—who themselves manage digital spaces—play in this, which can be done through designing and implementing a safeguarding plan. This plan ideally includes steps to create community guidelines, how to identify online abuse or harassment, how to report and link users to free psychological and legal support, content moderation strategies,



prioritizing secure and encrypted forms of communication, how to ensure that users are in control of their data and that the safety of their data is protected, create warnings for difficult/triggering content, among others. This information rights, safety and well-being should be easily understandable, and as inclusive and accessible as possible, particularly for young people from marginalized communities such as young people with disabilities and young people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, who are often targets of online abuse.

Aside from safety and privacy, mental health-risks of social media and the internet should not be overlooked. Young people face issues such as social media addiction, overuse and burnout due to factors such as fear of missing out (FOMO), as well as reality distortion due to the way social media often solely spotlights positive and ideal aspects of other people’s lives—all of which negatively impact their mental well-being, and should be of concern to creators. As panelists put it, digital platforms should be a safe and comfortable space for young people of all identities to freely fulfill their needs, express themselves, and experience pleasure, without fear of harm.



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Managing healthy online communities and interactions for DSE

Insights presented by:

- Kamori Osthanda T., Content Creator, Prism Thailand
- Vithika Yadav, [Love Matters](#) India
- Moderator: Jenelle Babb, Regional Advisor, Education for Health and Wellbeing at [UNESCO Bangkok](#)

Online communities can strengthen DSE content and provide spaces for young people to interact, build on each others’ ideas, reflect on learnings as well as give and receive social support; all of which are crucial for effective sexuality education. Prism from Thailand and Love Matters from India reflected on how their platforms build and manage online communities to support their DSE program. They both stressed the importance of intentional design with the users’ perspectives and needs in mind; for instance, Prism automates platform moderation by designing algorithms that can identify and eliminate hate speech and/or terms that are often used when attacking LGBTQIA+ communities. Both platforms identify that it can be tricky to moderate discussions around sexuality as it is a highly stigmatized topic,

and young people are at different points in their learning journey. Differing perspectives are therefore inevitable, but on the other side, when moderated well, they foster transformative discussions that can positively shape norms. Creators can strike a balance between maintaining an open space where young people feel free to question, agree, and disagree, but also ensuring that everyone does so respectfully, avoiding simplistic narratives, encouraging critical thinking and self-reflection, and promoting shared accountability to maintain a safe and comfortable digital environment. Love Matters promoted this shared accountability by empowering young people to be active content creators themselves, through providing youth with capacity building about content creation and netiquette/digital citizenship.

DSE and the broader enabling environment: How can DSE complement school-based CSE and youth-friendly services?

Insights presented by:

- Halim Kim and Asuka Someya, [Pilcon Japan](#)
- Tantri Swastika, [Unala Youth](#)
- Haoran Zheng, [UNFPA China](#)
- Moderator: Socheata, Dosslarb

As we know that DSE is not a silver bullet, panelists in this session reflected on their experiences in utilizing DSE to support school-based CSE and promote access to youth-friendly services. Pilcon Japan uses locally-adapted AMAZE.org videos, providing a suite of comprehensive and scientifically accurate animation-style videos on a wide range of SRH topics, to strengthen in-school CSE in Japan. They highlighted that teachers in schools have the flexibility to play the videos during a variety of classes, and in combination with other activities (such as discussions, role playing, etc). Pilcon provides teachers with booklets and worksheets to supplement the videos,

as well as an online training platform, which enables teachers to fully maximize these digital resources in order to improve the quality of CSE. Another example of DSE supporting in-school CSE comes from UNFPA China's program, which provides free CSE to remote schools using live streaming with an assigned tutor. This approach is low-cost, time-efficient and minimizes the requirement of local capacity. In both instances, challenges included ensuring that teachers have the necessary capacity to use digital platforms, that the content is relevant for the target audience's characteristics and environment, as well as taking into account cultural sensitivities while still being aligned with international guidelines.



In Indonesia, UNALA Youth provides youth-friendly SRH services and utilizes digital platforms for generating demand for these services. Their strategies of offering online consultation, conducting youth-led one-on-one outreach to young people through messaging platforms, and supplementing that with group activities such as webinars, online group discussions

and Instagram Lives which revolve around practical, relevant life skill topics have proven to be useful to increase young people's self-confidence in accessing UNALA's services. Building and collaborating with a digital ecosystem of fellow influencers, creators and youth networks in the SRH space is also a key part of their demand generation strategy.

Creating quality and trustworthy DSE content

Insights presented by:

- Evania Putri, [SobatAsk](#), Rutgers Indonesia
- Hla Hla Win, [360ed](#) Myanmar
- Nate Henderson and Nusrat Jahan, Family Planning NSW
- Moderator: Siti Aishah, [The SPOT Community Project](#)

In this panel, best practices and strategies in content quality assurance were discussed. For SobatAsk, this includes adapting content from CSE curricula, utilizing research evidence as their content basis, working with SRH experts and professionals, as well as implementing branding consistency. In Myanmar, 360ed also partners with reputable SRH NGOs to ensure content quality, and uses interactive learning content in various formats (online story books, augmented reality, animated videos, quizzes, games, etc) to reinforce lessons and messages adapted to young people's patterns of use of digital platforms.

Family Planning New South Wales shared that they adapt content from the [UN International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education](#) but address differences related to cultural sensitivities by providing space for people to talk through their values, which can lead to values clarification and build the acceptability and trustworthiness of DSE content.



However, all platforms recognize that there is a challenge in balancing between quantity and quality of content. To stay relevant, creators need to continuously produce content but this pace might make it more difficult to do quality assurance. Creators are recommended to adopt flexible mechanisms that allow them to produce quality, evidence-based content but still keep up with changing trends.

Working with diverse content formats for DSE

Insights presented by:

- Alvin Theodorus & Maria Michelle, [Tabu.id](#) Indonesia
- Saba Khalid, [Aurat Raaj](#) Pakistan
- Nicole Lim, [Something Private](#) / Our Grandfather Story Singapore
- Kavita Ayyagari, Howard Delafield International, Country Director and India Team Lead and Ameya Chaturvedi, Communication Designer for [Game of Choice, Not Chance](#) at Vihara Innovation Network
- Moderator: Wulan Nugrahani, [PILAR PKBI](#) Central Java Indonesia

Owing to the dynamic nature of digital spaces, DSE content can be found in a myriad of formats. This panel discussed best practices regarding newer content formats such as short-form videos, chatbots, audio-based content, as well as game-based content. Tabu.id from Indonesia shared that to create short-form videos (TikTok and Instagram Reels), creators have to make the first 5 seconds count; this includes making visuals, text and facial expressions that hook the audience's attention. Videos with minimal text showcasing real

SRH stories are typically more successful. Although it's advised to create a framework detailing key messages and sources prior to producing content to ensure quality, this process should be done quickly in order for creators to capitalize on TikTok/Reels trends that tend to be short-lived. With chatbots, Aurat Raaj from Pakistan has been able to provide an interactive platform that provides information in local languages, content in various formats (audio, videos, and GIFs, particularly for young people with low literacy)

as well as rich user data that can be used to detect patterns and feedback; however, investing in good user interface and user experience (UI/UX) design is key to optimize the usability of the platform.

The Singapore-based Something Private podcast discusses a breadth of sexual wellness topics, and has been able to achieve organic growth by adapting their podcast-based content into YouTube videos, Instagram and TikTok. From India, A Game of Choice, Not Chance co-designs role playing games to support girls' informed decision-making and agency with their target audience. The game places the player as a girl who's faced with SRH-related challenges typical in India. It allows the player to learn new SRH information from

other characters in the game, presents them with choices to overcome challenges, and offers rewards points for players who demonstrate knowledge and more empowered decision-making.

Across these different platforms, panelists agree that the key is to select formats based on the creators' objectives and niche, as well as the audience's needs. However, creators can also efficiently work with multiple formats through content mirroring (replicating content from one format and platform to another by making small adaptations to fit each platform).

Digital marketing for DSE

Insights presented by:

- Dian Engraini, [Berani Berencana](#) DKT Indonesia
- Ashiish V Patil, [Isspeshal Stratcon](#) / Sex Chat with Pappu & Papa India
- Nendra Monik, [DokterGenZ/Hipwee](#) Indonesia
- Atsil 'SISIL' Wasilah, Sex Educator & Content Creator of [SISILISM](#)
- Moderator: Catherine Harry, Vlogger, [A Dose of Cath](#)

From influencer marketing to brand partnerships, DSE platforms are increasingly using digital marketing strategies to promote their platforms and scale-up their reach. Panelists from DokterGenZ/Hipwee and Sisilism emphasize the importance of prioritizing creation of unique value for the audience; Berani Berencana further recommends that creators make sure at least 80% of their content are content that provides this value—by answering questions,

solving problems and providing tips—and leave only 20% for promotions. DokterGenZ applies the snackable content approach to maximize reach, prioritizing small, straightforward bits of information that easily captures attention and leaves the audience feeling satisfied from discovering something valuable and new. Paid advertising and [Search Engine Optimization \(SEO\)](#) can also be valuable, particularly given the unclear social media algorithms creators have to keep up and work with. These strategies can be optimized by putting ads on content that creators know will have a good chance of resonating with the target audience (through analyzing the performance of previous content), and selecting the right keywords for SEO (through observing the audience's use of language and terms).



Working with external partners such as brands and influencers is also key to tap into new audiences and, in the case of paid brand partnerships, remain financially sustainable. The creators behind Sisilism and Sex Chat with Pappu & Papa underline that to get partners on board, creators need to find and demonstrate good value alignment.

Partners are more likely to get involved if they are seamlessly integrated into the narrative and content; if the content is innovative, ground-breaking or new enough to instill a sense of fear of missing out (FOMO) in partners; if creators help partners justify being involved by “sampling” collaborations (starting with small, affordable but successful projects); and if partners see measurable impact for them through quantitative and qualitative data.

Monitoring and evaluation of DSE

Insights presented by:

- Alice Alden, Springster, [Girl Effect](#)
- Paromita Vohra, [Agents of Ishq](#) India
- Neira Budiono, [UNFPA Indonesia](#)
- Moderator: Benedict Bernabe, [Red Whistle](#) Philippines

Many creators understandably struggle to implement monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strategies for their platforms, particularly given the fact that the “gold standard” of M&E, the Randomized Controlled Trials, are often too resource-intensive. Panelists in this session shared alternative M&E approaches that are more feasible and affordable, but can still yield valuable data. Springster/Girl Effect shared that aside from the regular on-platform tracking of reach and engagement data, they also work with an online research community of girls to administer pre-post surveys based on controlled exposure to content. Social media ads targeting tools can also be used to target surveys to audiences who have seen our content and those who haven't, allowing creators to compare between the two. To make it easier for and incentivize audiences to participate in data collection, Girl Effect utilizes fact check quizzes as knowledge-based outcome evaluation and personality quizzes to assess attitudes.

Similarly, colleagues from UNFPA Indonesia encouraged creators to consider [lean data](#), which is an approach that focuses on real-time, low-cost, speed, but high-quality data. They shared a framework called The 5 Metric Starter Kit, in which creators and platform managers evaluate their platforms' success through 5 metrics,

namely platform performance, usage, engagement, health outputs (e.g. SRH knowledge improvement), and health outcomes (e.g. condom use, clinic visit).

To optimize data quality, the Starter Kit recommends creators to:

1. Combine and triangulate survey data with FGDs, interviews, and in-person verification
2. Update questions to help collect any new data points of interest
3. Figure out which questions work/don't in a given target audience, in which format, and in what structure

Agents of Ishq from India argued for a more holistic, nuanced, and politically aware M&E approach by also focusing on qualitative analysis of community sharing and interactions (such as comments analysis), taking into account factors such as the diversity of attitudes that young people can show in a single place and time, resistance to new information, and algorithm influences. Finally, all panelists stressed the importance of meaningfully engaging target audiences in M&E strategies, allowing a more participatory and empowering approach to impact evaluation.

Rapid user testing and iteration on a budget

Insights presented by:

- Vashisht Meru, [HCDEXchange](#)
- John Maina, HCDEXchange

Implementing a [human-centered design \(HCD\)](#) approach—which involves rapid user testing and product iteration—enables creators to tailor their digital solutions to their audience’s needs, but can be costly to do. Colleagues from HCDEXchange shared practical tips in conducting testing and iteration with limited resources. In the design phase, it is important to test and iterate continuously along the way instead of leaving it for the end—this way, creators can build quick, small and affordable prototypes for each key moment or component of the product. Prototypes should also be built in a way that is easy to alter so that creators don’t need to build one from scratch for each testing session. As testing with large groups of users can be difficult, creators can also save resources by selecting the right group of users to test with. Identifying extreme user profiles for the intended experience can point us to the group of people who we should prioritize. For instance, when testing the usability of an app,

we can select a group of users who will likely have the most difficult time navigating the app and test with them; this is done on the assumption that an app that works for this extreme user will work for everyone, so we may not have to test with the majority. However, it is important to keep in mind that extreme user profiles will be different for each design question, so it is important to select the right extreme user profile based on your specific objectives.

On a similar note, during the implementation phase, creators can take feedback and evaluate the effectiveness of the product by also targeting the right people using digital ad tools on existing popular platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram). Paying attention to the feasibility of the product will also help creators; connecting and engaging with stakeholders (e.g. service providers, government agencies, community leaders) will enable us to translate user needs into feasible solutions.

Storytelling for DSE: Creating impactful content and narratives

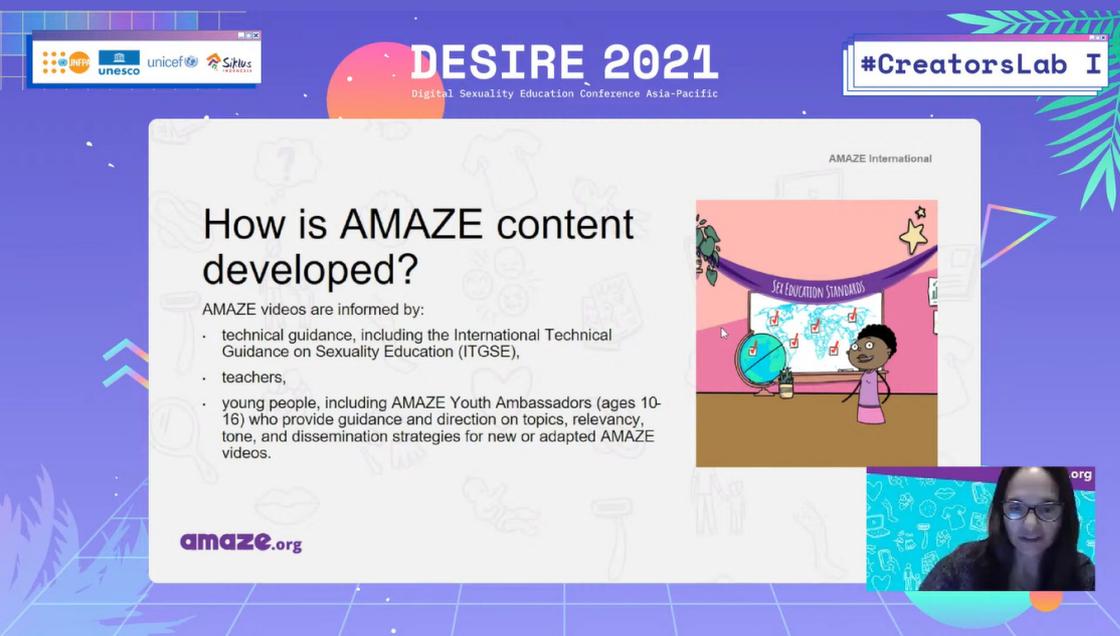
Insights presented by:

- Nicole Cheetham, [Advocates for Youth \(AMAZE.org\)](#)

Storytelling is a powerful tool that can be utilized to better engage young people in DSE content, allowing creators to reinforce key messages that resonate with young people, are easily remembered as well as promote connection and empathy.

Advocates for Youth, who implements this principle in their highly popular AMAZE videos, uses a three-part approach in their stories:

- The beginning, where the protagonist or main character is introduced, along with their personalities, identities, hopes, dreams, etc.
- The middle, where a struggle, conflict or obstacle is encountered by the character
- The end, which explains the outcome or the aftermath of the situation after the protagonist has resolved the issues



The creator/storyteller's role is to help the audience draw conclusions and/or reflect on how they can solve the situation on their own. In order to sufficiently prepare for storytelling content, creators can first develop a content or creative brief to capture the overarching tone, educational objectives, key messages, background, and resources.

A script would then be written based on the brief, and subsequently, a detailed storyboard. As audiences can relate better when the stories are reflective or similar to their own experiences, it is recommended that creators engage teachers, experts, international guidelines and most importantly young people themselves to come up with story ideas.

Accessible design crash course

Insights presented by:

- Fura Gelzen Sherpa, Board Member, [Y-PEER Nepal](#)
- Awnu Shrestha, Co-founder/Member; Y-PEER Nepal and [Disabilities 2030](#)

Digital platforms, while improving access to SRHR information and services for many, can also exclude young people from marginalized communities who have limited and/or different usage of technology, particularly young people with disabilities. Y-PEER Asia Pacific and Disabilities 2030 noted that there are several concrete steps that creators can take to improve the accessibility of their content and platforms, one of the most important being providing options to access content through different modalities for instance putting subtitles, live captions and sign language interpreters on all videos, audio descriptions of visual materials, and alt-text for graphic content. Websites can also be equipped with accessibility tools such as zoom-in options, assistive listening systems, and keyboard shortcuts for those who are unable to use a full keyboard.

Platforms should have a low-data mode for young people with limited data; an offline mode for young people who don't have reliable and consistent internet connections; and a "lite" mode for young people with small or low-cost mobile phones. Creators should keep in mind to consider diversity and intersectionality within disability and accessibility, and that young people with disabilities and/or accessibility limitations should play a sustained, active role in the planning and design process. Budgeting and resources for these accessibility tools should be integrated from the very beginning of program management to allow for prioritization, and not just as components to be added as afterthoughts. These principles should underlie all diversity and inclusion efforts in DSE.

Designing DSE spaces for LGBTQIA+ youth and young key populations

Insights presented by:

- Ronivin Pagtakhan, Executive Director, [Love Yourself Inc](#)

To address the needs of **young key populations*** in the Philippines, colleagues from Love Yourself Inc utilizes a holistic care approach that treats HIV not just as a health issue but rather a complex social issue affected by many different social, emotional and political factors.

**Young key populations are people between the ages of 10 and 24 years who are most likely to be exposed to HIV or to transmit it, which includes men who have sex with men and transgender people, adolescents who are sexually exploited by (under 18) or engaged in (18 and over) sex work, people who inject drugs, those in detention centers and other closed settings, orphans, street children, migrants, mobile workers, and people with disabilities. Source: UNICEF.*

As emphasized in their digital campaigns, content and community engagement, DSE for LGBTQIA+ youth and young key populations should also promote self-worth and address the mental health of young key populations, empowering target audiences to take control of their own well-being and to be health champions in their respective communities.

Content should also address the barriers young key populations face in taking care of their own health, which includes misconceptions about testing and HIV, concerns about being stigmatized, confidentiality and privacy, fear of what happens when one tests positive, etc. Love Yourself recommends finding champions in different groups of society—in schools, universities, and particularly among digital influencers—who have shared values and are willing to be allies, in order to build stronger support systems. When creators are facing a particularly strong risk of backlash—which tends to happen when DSE is aimed to help LGBTQIA+ youth and young key populations—there might be value in slightly altering the branding of services and/or products so as to seem “safer” or less controversial to the general public (e.g. branding a service as a men’s health clinic instead of a clinic for men who have sex with men).

Games for learning: Game-based courses for social-emotional learning and DSE

Insights presented by:

- Vignesh Mukund, UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development

Colleagues from UNESCO MGIEP shared perspectives and best practices from their experiences in utilizing digital games for social-emotional learning, which is also a key part of sexuality education. This approach is affirmed by the fact that play is humans’ natural way of discovering new things and acquiring new knowledge, and that skills

we learn in a game can be useful outside of the game and in reality. Furthermore, there are several key parallels between the ideal digital gamer and the ideal learner, as both are hooked to problem-solving, motivated by displays of mastery (e.g. achieving something), and consider failure as a learning opportunity. For sensitive and stigmatized topics such as SRHR in particular, games are a neutral, fun and less intimidating first foray into sexuality education.



While games in and of themselves may not be sufficient to achieve key learning objectives, the approach of game-based courses can bridge this gap and ensure that learning indeed takes place. In [game-based courses](#), educators design learning outcomes and structure courses around the narrative of a digital game. Digital games are used in the same way as textbooks are in traditional learning methods—as learning materials—and further instructional activities serve to reinforce the learning that happened in the game space and extrapolate it to the context of real life.

Steps to implement this approach include:

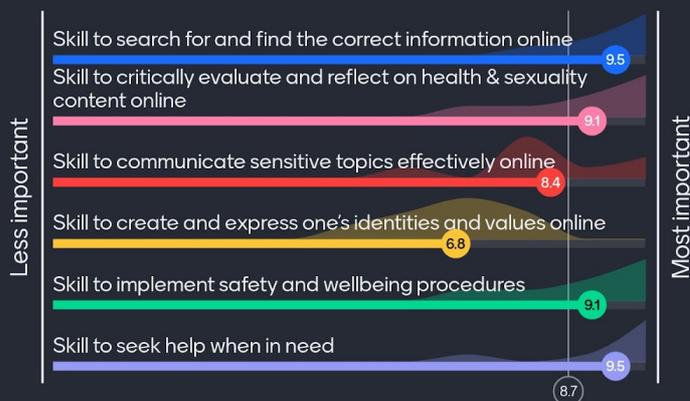
- Selection of the game,
- Identification of learning outcomes,
- Identification of pause points (critical points in the game where the player has made a choice that has consequences), during which it's important to remove the player from the game and link the situation to learning concepts, and
- Integration of instructional activities (e.g. discussions).

Roundtable with tech stakeholders

Insights presented by:

- David Lu Qilin, President of Huawei Asia Pacific Strategy Marketing Dept
- Toan Son Dang, UNESCO ICTs in Education
- Ellen Kusuma, [SafeNet](#) (Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network)
- Moderator: Dhyta Caturani, [Purple Code Collective](#) Indonesia

What do you think are the most important digital skills needed for young people to benefit from DSE?

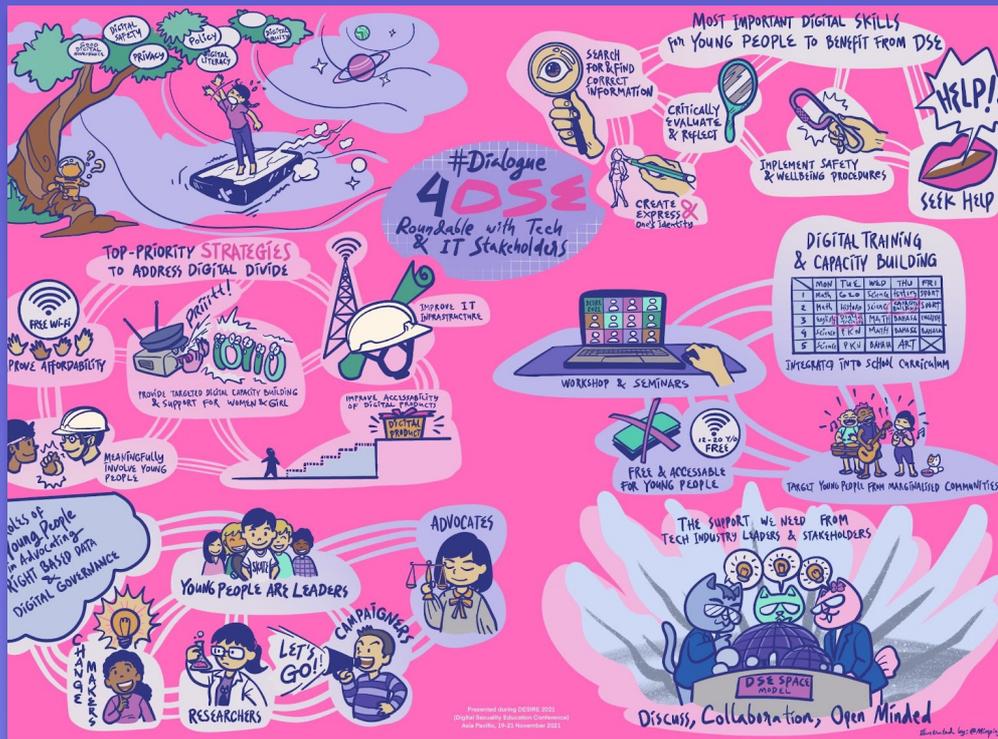


This roundtable featured a moderated discussion session between creators and technology stakeholders, during which panelists responded to audience live polling results about DSE issues. Topics of concern included digital literacy, inclusivity and safety, critical thinking, netiquette and IT (Information Technology) infrastructure.

Polling revealed that young people deem search skills to find correct information online, and knowing how to find help online are the most important digital skills young people need to benefit from DSE. Colleagues from UNESCO and SafeNet remarked that the help-seeking skills are particularly crucial. Since young people face elevated risks in digital spaces, it is very important they recognize when they need support and know how to access it.

The panel also discussed the kind of digital training that young people need. Prominent answers from the audience included integrating digital literacy into school curriculums, targeting youth in marginalized communities, designing fun activities and media for learning, implementing an empowering approach, and ensuring affordability and accessibility for all. The panel also highlighted this empowering approach, noting down that interventions should enable young people to exercise their digital agency and create solutions while maximizing the tools that they have.

Strategies to bridge the digital divide, as a prerequisite to ensure that all young people can benefit from DSE, were also explored in the panel. Young people voted that the most important strategies are to improve IT infrastructure in less developed areas, improve accessibility of digital products, and provide targeted digital capacity building and support for women and girls. Colleagues from Huawei echoed these results, stating that building infrastructure alone is not enough, and providing examples of how their TechForAll digital inclusion program not only tackles the infrastructure problem but also provides capacity building for women in rural and remote areas via innovative methods such as a high-tech digital training bus.



Feedback and comments from participants

Based on the results of the feedback form :

- Average satisfaction score was **4.7** out of **5**
- **75.6%** stated that they were very satisfied with the conference
- **17.8%** stated that they were more than satisfied



The following are quotes from post-event interviews with participants, exploring their experiences attending the conference:

*Images are not designed to represent the participants quoted



"The platform itself, the design and the layout, was very impressive. I liked that the organizers invited different stakeholders and NGOs from countries throughout Asia-Pacific. Through these different stakeholders, I can watch, see and learn from diverse perspectives, particularly on how they convey their messages through digital media that's very interesting for me."

— Participant from Malaysia



"The conference was a great opportunity for me to learn. I learned a lot during the talk regarding sponsorship and mobilizing resources, as I realized that there were multiple opportunities and funding models that I can explore for my initiative."



—Participant from Thailand



"I really enjoyed the topics discussed and also that all the materials were uploaded online so I could watch the sessions that I wasn't able to attend. Overall it was such an enjoyable experience, even the design of the conference was really aesthetically pleasing, I showed off to my friends of how pretty the website is!"

—Participant from Indonesia



"Through the conference, I learned that digital safety plays a vital role and every information we share with the world should be encrypted properly before sharing it."



—Participant from Bhutan



However, participants also noted that the following points can be improved for future conferences and events:

- ✓ Ensure that sign language interpreters are available for all sessions, not just for particular sessions
- ✓ Provide accessibility tools and assistance for young people with different disabilities, for instance young people with vision impairment or low vision
- ✓ Moderators and session coordinators should communicate more clearly with the audience when a speaker or resource person cannot present due to sudden and unforeseen circumstances
- ✓ Consider lengthening the duration of some of the sessions as certain topics need more time to get into specific details
- ✓ Consider adding subtitles to the video recording of sessions since sometimes the audio might not be clear
- ✓ Establish a clearer and more consistent mechanism of communication with the participants to share announcements, important updates, etc.
- ✓ Disseminate the conference promotional materials more widely to attract more participants

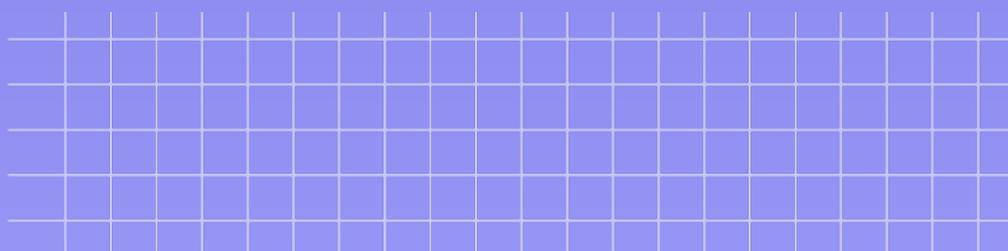
Summary of recommendations

Thematic area	Recommendations
Keeping up with Digital Sexuality Education: Latest research and reports in Asia-Pacific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide content and support that is responsive to the four main ways that young people use digital platforms for SRHR, namely: 1) Creating, accessing and sharing SRH information, 2) Building communities and accessing SRH support, 3) Exploring sexual norms and sexual identity, and 4) Forming and exploring intimate relationships. • Address the 3Cs of online risks that young people face (Contact, Conduct, Content) through a digital safeguarding plan. • Address barriers that prevent young people from fully benefiting from digital platforms for SRHR, such as stigma, concerns about privacy and confidentiality, low digital literacy, lack of trust in online SRH information, concerns about internet addiction, and others. • Utilize the skills mapping report to design capacity building and identify resources for DSE creators, ensuring that they are well-equipped to run their platforms successfully.
Promoting rights, safety and well-being in the digital space through DSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and implement a digital safeguarding plan, which includes community guidelines, identifying and reporting online harassment, referring users to support, content moderation, secure communication, and others—which should be readily accessible to all users, particularly young people from marginalized communities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information and support for young people to protect their mental health and well-being, addressing digital risks such as Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), body image, reality distortion, and others.
<p>Managing healthy online communities and interactions for DSE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigate a balance between maintaining an open space where young people feel free to question, agree, and disagree, but also ensuring that everyone does so respectfully. • Promote shared accountability among users to maintain a safe and comfortable digital environment for all.
<p>DSE and the broader enabling environment: How can DSE complement school-based CSE and youth-friendly services?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide resources (worksheets, session instructions, digital training, etc) for teachers and educators to utilize DSE flexibly in their own contexts to enable them to fully maximize these digital resources. • Supplement personal outreach with group activities such as webinars, online group discussions and Instagram Lives, collaborating with digital influencers in the ecosystem. • Promote young people’s self-worth and confidence to access services by educating users about practical life skill topics.
<p>Creating quality and trustworthy DSE content</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure DSE content quality through adapting content from CSE curriculums, utilizing research evidence as their content basis, working with SRH experts and professionals, implementing branding consistency, and using content in various formats to mutually reinforce key messages. • Address differences related to cultural sensitivities to help the acceptability and trustworthiness of DSE content when adapting content from international guidelines. • Adopt flexible mechanisms that allow them to produce quality, evidence-based content but still keep up with changing trends.
<p>Working with diverse content formats for DSE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select formats based on the creators’ objectives and niche, as well as the audience’s needs, and ensure that content design is based on each format’s best practices. • Work on multiple platforms through content mirroring (replicating content from one format to another by making small adaptations)
<p>Digital marketing for DSE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize creating unique value for the audience, by applying the 80-20 rule; at least 80% of content should provide value and leave only 20% for promotions. • Applying the snackable content approach by prioritizing small, straightforward bits of information that easily captures attention and leaves the audience feeling satisfied. • Put ads on content that creators know will have a good chance of resonating with the target audience through analyzing the performance of previous content. • Select the right keywords for Search Engine Optimization through observing the audience’s use of language and terms. • Get partners and brands on board through demonstrating good value alignment, seamlessly integrating products into the narrative and content, creating content that is innovative to instill a sense of fear of missing out (FOMO) in partners, “sampling” collaborations, and showing measurable impact through data.

<p>Monitoring & evaluation for DSE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use social media ad targeting tools to target surveys to audiences who have seen our content and those who haven't, allowing for comparison. • Utilize fact check quizzes and personality quizzes to incentivize audiences to participate in data collection. • Consider lean data, an approach that focuses on real-time, low-cost, speed, but high-quality data, using The 5 Metric Starter Kit (platform performance, usage, engagement, health outputs, health outcomes). • Ensure data quality by triangulating survey data with FGDs, interviews, and in-person verification, updating questions to collect new data points of interest and figuring out which questions, which format and what structure work for an audience. • Take into account qualitative data of community sharing and interactions (such as comments, messages, etc) and conduct a nuanced, contextual analysis. • Meaningfully engage target audiences in M&E strategies,
<p>Rapid user testing and iteration on a budget</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test and iterate continuously through building quick, small, affordable and easily altered prototypes for each key moment or component of the product. • Save resources by selecting the right group of users to test with through identifying extreme user profiles for the intended experience. • Connect with stakeholders (e.g. service providers, government agencies, community leaders) to translate user needs into feasible solutions.
<p>Storytelling for DSE: Creating impactful content and narratives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the storytelling approach through creating a 3-part narrative consisting of the beginning (introduction of characters), the middle (conflict/struggle), and the end (resolution). • Develop stories for content by creating a content brief, a script, and a storyboard.
<p>Accessible design</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide options for young people to access content through different modalities, for instance; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Subtitles and live captions ◦ Sign language interpreters ◦ Audio descriptions and alt-text of visual materials ◦ Zoom-in options ◦ Assistive listening systems ◦ Keyboard shortcuts ◦ Low-data, offline and "lite" mode for platforms • Prepare budgeting and resources from the beginning to ensure that platforms have accessibility options and that they are well-maintained.
<p>Designing DSE spaces for LGBTQIA+ youth and young key populations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create content that promotes self-worth and address the health barriers that LGBTQIA+ and young key populations face, empowering them to take control of their own well-being. • Slightly altering the branding of services and/or products so as to seem less controversial to the general public might be valuable for highly stigmatized issues. • Collaborate with other digital influencers to build a supportive digital ecosystem.

<p>Games for learning: Game-based courses for social-emotional learning and DSE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When utilizing game-based courses, design learning outcomes and structure courses around the narrative of a digital game, and use the digital game as learning materials. • Steps to implement this approach include 1) selection of the game, 2) identification of learning outcomes, 3) identification of pause points, 4) integration of instructional activities.
<p>DSE in the broader digital and tech ecosystem</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital literacy training should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Prioritize building skills to search for and find the correct information online as well as skills to seek help when needed ◦ Be integrated into school curriculums ◦ Utilize fun activities and media for learning ◦ Take an empowering approach to promote agency ◦ Be affordable and accessible to all ◦ Offer women, girls, and youth in marginalized communities targeted digital capacity building and support. • Improve IT infrastructure in less developed areas and improve the accessibility of digital products to bridge the digital divide.
<p>Future focus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue strengthening the DSE ecosystem in the Asia-Pacific region by providing capacity building and resources for creators and practitioners, utilizing existing knowledge products and the skills mapping report to identify needs and capacity gaps. • Develop, disseminate and support the implementation of a DSE content quality assurance mechanism and standards framework that creators can adapt. • Conduct more youth-led research particularly on how young people utilize digital platforms for SRHR beyond just for information needs, but also for building communities, accessing support, exploring norms and forming intimate relationships—exploring facilitators, barriers and factors. • Develop, disseminate and support the implementation of digital safeguarding guidelines and principles to ensure that DSE practitioners are appropriately addressing the digital risks that young people face. • Integrate more digital literacy content in DSE platforms and explore how this can be done effectively. • Continue working with the digital and tech ecosystem (including industry partners, digital rights defenders and particularly social media companies) to ensure that young people’s SRHR can be fully supported in all digital spaces through engaging in dialogues, co-designing programs and campaigns, etc.



Relevant links



[DESIRE 2021 Participant Guidelines](#)



[DESIRE 2021 Event Overview](#)



[DESIRE 2021 Social media and communications toolkit for promotion](#)



[Live illustration results](#)



[Walkthrough platform video guideline](#)



[Recording of all sessions](#)



[Speakers materials and presentations](#)



[Virtual booth materials](#)

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Digital Sexuality Education Conference Asia-Pacific

