

Durex Connect-ED empowers youth to make sound choices about sexual health

With sex education playing a significant role in enabling our youth to take full control of their sexual behaviour, Durex's Connect-ED programme aims to make a difference in South African communities.



According to the Durex Global Sex Survey, one-quarter of 18 to 24-year-olds lost their virginity at age 16 or under. Most people (65%) did not plan to lose their virginity, this was higher (66%) amongst people who did not receive sex education compared to (62%) of those who did. Having said that, 48% of virgins worry about HIV Aids, 42% worry about catching an STI, and 24% are concerned about unwanted pregnancy. When losing their virginity 48% of people used a condom, this was higher (52%) amongst people who had sex education and lower (30%) amongst those who did not.

“Connect-ED is an innovative high school programme designed to educate students about relationships, sexual health, abstinence and condom usage,” says Tania Goncalves-Da Conceicao, Durex brand manager. The Connect-ED programme was developed in 2012 by Durex in partnership with the Gauteng Department of Education.

Focus areas

Connect-ED aims to target learners through as many of these touchpoints as possible and the programme consists of three main parts:

School production: The Connect-ED team travels to schools around South Africa and performs a live show along with the screening of a short movie 'The Line'. The entertaining movie shows the story of six high school teenagers and their encounters during through a day in their lives.

Connect-Ed Guide book for students: The book, illustrated with cartoons, is distributed among participating schools and brings to life important concepts related to sexual health and emotions. Some of the topics discussed include emotional aspects of sexual health, contraception, negotiating condom use, HIV/AIDS, STIs, unintended pregnancies and constitutional rights of minors related to sexual health and wellbeing. Educational posters are also put up in schools.

Connect-Ed Buddy: This is an online advisor through which learners are counselled on matters related to their sexual health with anonymity and confidentiality. The high-school learners can get information about sex anonymously through this website.



Empowered decision-making and support

Through the programme, Durex provided sex education to over 2.6 million and educators in the last five years. Between 2012 and 2017, 1,300 schools were visited by the Connect-ED team and an additional 220 schools will be reached in 2018.

The Durex Global Sex Survey also highlights that globally 87% of 18 to 24-year-olds had sex education with the most common age for receiving this being between 12 and 13-years-old and 95% agree that sex education enables people to be more responsible when having sex. Two-thirds of 18 to 24-year-olds agree that they need more information about how to communicate about sex, while over half agree that they need more information about STIs and HIV/AIDS.

“Durex Connect-ED aims to shift the mindset of our youth, enabling them to make better choices about their sexual health. It aims to reach learners before they lose their virginity and to reduce the rates of STI’s, HIV/AIDs and unplanned pregnancies. Connect-ED advocates for abstinence first, alternatively, safer sexual practices among the youth, encouraging a positive change in sexual behaviour. In addition, it empowers educators to provide better support to learners in school by aiding them with sexual education material,” concluded Goncalves-Da Conceicao.