

Teach students about sex: Marina

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'Schools best place for imparting such knowledge'

By **Toh An Nee**

PETALING JAYA, Tues: Schools are the most appropriate place to provide children with sex or family health education, Malaysian AIDS Council president Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir said.

She said a proper syllabus will ensure a systematic education.

She believes it is highly selfish and irresponsible of adults to deny children this knowledge.

"The fear is that if we give children sex education, they will go out and do it. But the syllabus is presumably being put together by responsible ma-

ture adults so I don't see how anything that encourages children to have sex could get in there."

She also questioned why the people who developed the syllabus for mathematics, science and other school subjects are not trusted to come up with a sex education syllabus.

"Don't we trust our teachers to impart this information in a rational way?" she said.

In countries such as the Netherlands where sex education is taught in schools in a systematic way, Marina said the children there have sex later than those in countries which do not provide such education.

"But when they do, they

already have, how could sex education possibly contribute to more?"

Speaking on *Teaching about HIV/AIDS, Saving the Lives of Our Young* at the International Education Conference here yesterday, Marina stressed on the need for HIV/AIDS education, including sex education, in schools.

Not talking about sex to young people nowadays can be deadly as many are exposed to sex in various ways at an age when they can become very confused about the subject, she added.

Marina said HIV/AIDS education must also address stigma and discrimination, and emphasise gender equality.

know how to protect themselves and there are fewer teen pregnancies.

"Looking at the number of abandoned babies we