PUTTING THE C IN CSE:
STANDARDS FOR CONTENT, DELIVERY AND ENVIRONMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) is exciting, fun, but also challenging. To support educators and implementers in formal and non - formal settings to deliver effective CSE, Plan International has developed a series of standards. These standards are based on a set of principles, including a comprehensive, human rights-based, gender transformative, inclusive and sex-positive aproach towards the sexuality, sexual development and (sexual) relationships of children, adolescents, and young people. Professional, high quality CSE is an important contribution to help learners to become confident, and to enable them to discuss sexuality and relationships without fear, openly and honestly. Today we benefit from a continually improving and growing field of learning and guidance on CSE - we have found that it can be challenging to put all this into practice. This guidance compiles key evidence and top tips so that we can continue advancing our CSE journey.

THE STANDARDS

The 14 standards are comprehensive and interconnected. When delivering CSE, the best-case scenario is to use all the standards as a whole. This would mean adapting content to the context, taking the best approaches and methods to foster effective learning, considering the stakeholders involved in CSE, the enabling environment, and using CSE as an opportunity to link education with services. However, you can also take a step-by-step approach and decide which standards you prefer to work on first. Plan International's CSE programme assessment tool (forthcoming) can help you to prioritise.

We have tried to take into consideration the likely needs, cultural diversity and challenges concerning CSE. We acknowledge that based on the characteristics of the population, some countries or regions may need to expand on some issues described in the standards or consider more specific social barriers and opportunities.

WHO IS THIS DOCUMENT FOR?

This publication is primarily intended for use by Plan International staff:

* programme managers, coordinators, technical advisers
* other staff members involved in the design, implementation or monitoring of CSE initiatives
* educators, peer facilitators and other community-based volunteers.

It can also be used by other sexual and reproductive health (SRH) organisations, programmers in CSE and education (public and private), and those in the broader development community who are working to improve CSE content and outcomes for children, adolescents and young people.

WHAT YOU CAN FIND IN THIS DOCUMENT

For each standard, this document explains:

- **Introduction - What it is and why it is important:** Plan International's understanding of the standard, its rationale, the evidence and principles. When relevant, it includes the benefits and challenges of using the standard.

- **How it works in practice:** We explain what you need to deliver and/or enable the specific standard: content, educational approaches, key stakeholders to involve, types of settings and examples.

- **Tips:** Practical advice for educators, trainers and implementers to consider.

- **Resources:** At the end of the guidance, you will find an overview of links with suggestions for practical toolkits and further reading as well as references for publications used to inform each standard.

Note: In the standards, we use the terms children, adolescents, and young people, and learners. By "learners" we mean children, adolescents, and young people who participate in CSE sessions in formal and non-formal settings

OVERVIEW OF STANDARDS

CONTENT

Standard 1: Context analysis
CSE programmes are informed by an in-depth analysis carried out with communities of the priority issues for children, adolescents and young people related to sexuality, including context and underlying gender and social norms.

Standard 2: Comprehensive information
CSE provides clear, comprehensive, accurate, non-judgmental information and includes substantive discussions on sex, sexuality, relationships and consent, contraceptive choices and abortion care.

Standard 3: Gender and power
CSE contributes to transforming unequal gender power relations through substantive discussions on gender, power and identity to challenge harmful norms and practices and other forms of gender-based violence (GBV).

Standard 4: Positivity and pleasure
CSE addresses sex and sexuality from a holistic perspective, looking at positive experiences such as pleasure, rather than focusing on negative ones such as risks and fear.

Standard 5: Diversity and non-discrimination
CSE emphasises inclusion of adolescents and young people in all their diversity, and provides sensitive, respectful and non-discriminatory messages.

Standard 6: Age and Stage
CSE curricula are age and developmentally appropriate, and respond to children, adolescents and young people's evolving capacities and needs.

DELIVERY

Standard 7: Safety
CSE programmes are delivered in a safe learning environment.

Standard 8: Educator Support
CSE programmes are based on quality training and continuous support to educators.

Standard 9: Participatory, skills-building
CSE uses participatory teaching approaches that provide opportunities to explore and discuss personal values and attitudes, and build relevant skills and the confidence to make decisions.

CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Standard 10: Supportive whole school
CSE programmes are supported by an enabling environment in the school/organisational setting.

Standard 11: Youth engagement
CSE programmes promote and facilitate the meaningful engagement of children, adolescents and young people throughout all stages of the project cycle to ensure programmes respond to their needs and preferences.

Standard 12: Caregivers' involvement
CSE programmes support interventions with parents and caregivers to build their confidence and skills in talking to their children about sexuality from early childhood.

Standard 13: Service linkages
CSE ensures strong linkages with relevant adolescent and gender-responsive health services locally, and with child protection services that are also relevant for younger children.

Standard 14: Policies and laws
CSE programmes are supported by appropriate legislation and policies.

CSE IS MORE THAN A CURRICULUM

THIS DOCUMENT IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) states that **all young people have the right to complete and evidence-based information, to participation and protection.** CSE must take the needs and rights of all children, adolescents, and young people seriously. It must ensure that they know their rights and that they are actively involved and empowered to make informed decisions.

- CSE is **comprehensive**. It covers sexual and reproductive health issues, including, but not limited to: sexual and reproductive anatomy and physiology; puberty and menstruation; reproduction, contraception, pregnancy and childbirth; and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV and AIDS. CSE covers the full range of topics that are important for all learners to know, including those that may be challenging in some social and cultural contexts. "Comprehensive" also refers to the breadth and depth of topics and to content that is consistently delivered to learners over time, throughout their education, rather than as a one- off lesson or intervention. It includes other life skills for health and wellbeing in relation to sexuality, human rights, a healthy and respectful family life and interpersonal relationships, personal and shared values, cultural and social norms, gender equality, non-discrimination, sexual behaviour, violence

and gender-based violence (GBV), consent and bodily integrity, sexual abuse and harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and unions (CEFMU) and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) (UNESCO, 2018)

- CSE has a **positive view of learners' development including their sexuality.** Instead of giving warnings and using scare tactics, CSE empowers learners to enjoy and take control over their sexuality and sexual life. It considers young people as autonomous sexual subjects with the right to experience desire, pleasure and happiness in their lives and to have control and agency over their bodies–whether they are sexually active or not. As a result, sex-positive approaches strive to achieve ideal experiences, rather than solely working to prevent negative experiences. **To achieve this, CSE needs to be delivered in a safe and trustworthy environment,** so that learners feel involved, listened to, comfortable, and without fear of being laughed at, especially when they take risks by sharing new, controversial ideas.

- CSE is **gender-transformative:** it seeks to foster equitable social norms and structures; advance individual gender-equitable behaviour; transform gender roles; create more gender-equitable relationships, and engage in policy and legislative change to support equitable social systems.

HOW CAN THE CSE STANDARDS BE APPLIED IN HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS?

Access to information and sexuality education, is critical for children, adolescents and young people before, during and after crises as it enables them to gain knowledge about their bodies and health, explore values and attitudes, and build skills and coping mechanisms related to SRHR. Delivery modalities are likely to differ in humanitarian settings than from those in longer term, development settings.

The CSE standards can and should be used as guiding principles for the content, delivery and support for enabling environment of sexuality education as we promote access to lifesaving SRHR information and services in crises.

Activities can roughly be divided into two categories:

- **SRHR awareness raising** aims to provide SRHR knowledge and skills, and increase access and utilisation of SRHR services,and can be provided through peer educators, as part of safe spaces,through community awareness sessions, distribution of information, education and communications materials, or campaigns and outreach activities
- **Sexuality education and dialogues** offer more structured educational approaches which can be integrated into the curriculum in formal and non-formal education, in learning spaces, safe spaces, and health centres or as part of life skills curricula, or take place during dialogues between adolescents and caregivers. The CSE standards should be consulted when designing these interventions.

During implementation important considerations and adjustments to the standards should be made to identify safe and effective entry points for their delivery, not least during the acute phase of a crisis. In humanitarian crises, there should also be **a strong focus on information dissemination about available services and how to access them,** particular for those who have experienced or are at-risk of sexual and gender-based violence or another type of protection concern as well as those who need more specialised services.
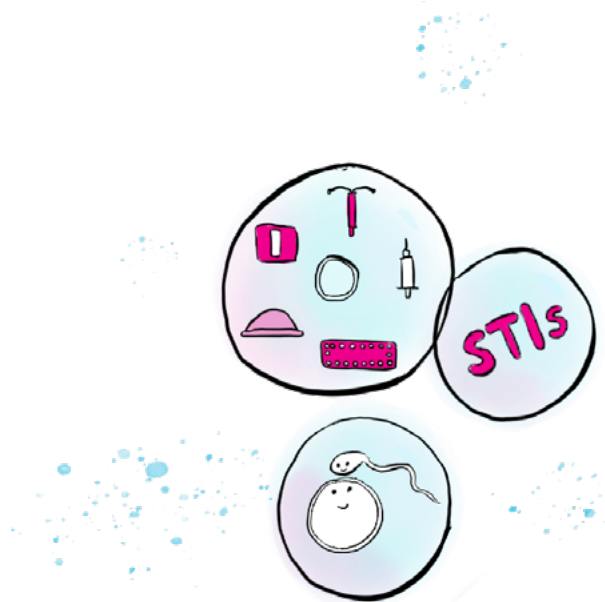
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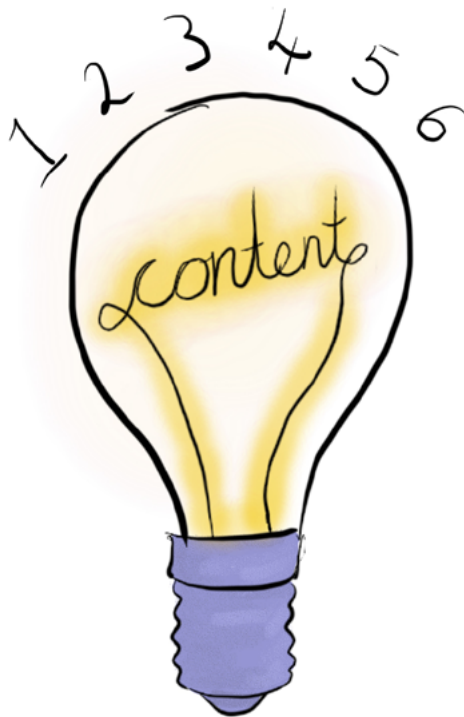
CSE programmes are informed by an in-depth analysis carried out with communities communities of the priority issues for children, adolescents and young people related to sexuality, including context and underlying gender and social norms.

INTRODUCTION

Although there are international guidelines and standards for the content of CSE, we need to make CSE lessons contextually relevant. One of the main characteristics of impactful CSE is that it is evidence-informed. But to develop and introduce a CSE programme effectively, robust evidence and science are not enough. We also need to bear in mind the cultural and religious norms in the countries and communities in which CSE is taught.
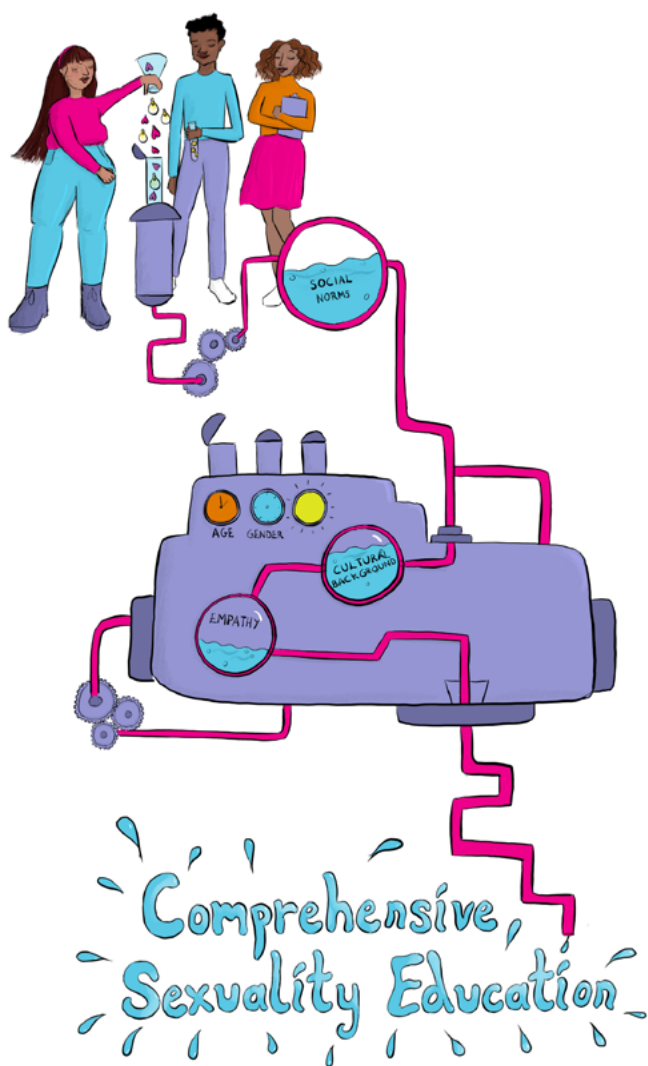
What information should you gather to make the content of your lessons relevant for the learners concerned and to base it on their needs and on specific SRHR issues in your context?

How can you make a connection between the values and social norms in your community and the realities of young people's sexuality and their SRHR?

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW TO DESIGN A CSE PROGRAMME?

Quantitative data: public health data
To better understand the sexual and reproductive health status of learners, data from official public health services, as far as they are available, can provide you with general information on:

- Number (#) of boys/girls attending school
- (primary/secondary)
- Prevalence of HIV/STIs
- Prevalence of young people living with HIV
- Young people's attitudes towards people living with HIV
- Prevalence of contraception
- Prevalence of abortion
- Median age at first birth
- Median age of marriage
- # who have had sex before age 15
- # who have had multiple partners
- # who used a condom in the past 12 months
- # of young people who have unmet needs for contraception
- Prevalence of gender-based violence or % who agree with at least one reason why a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife
- % of women aged 15-24 who have experienced sexual violence
  (See resources for an overview of links to access data)

Qualitative data: facts, values and norms in the community
National and international statistics are general and may not include specific data from your community. You need to "translate" the national statistics to your environment: the community, village, or urban context. To make the CSE programme more contextually relevant, you need to get a better understanding of the "sexual culture" in your community. Ask stakeholders, including parents, religious/cultural leaders and young people how their community thinks or acts regarding the following topics:

- When it is acceptable to have sex (before marriage, during marriage, outside of marriage), or at what age
- Acceptable number of partners
- Labelling sexual encounters: what meaning people give to sexual encounters (for reproduction/love etc.)
- Reasons for marriage
- Male/female roles during a sexual encounter
- Acceptable/non-acceptable sex behaviours (especially for young people)
- Values about gender and gender equity
- Hygiene (menstruation)
- Genital modification
- Virginity
- Fertility, contraception
- Sexuality education programmes at school or out of school
- Gender norms
- Sexual violence/harassment towards girls, GBV in marriage and relationships

In some countries, you may find data on the number of young people having access to social media, and their use of mobile phones. Often more boys have access than girls. This can give you an indication of how many young people have access to information on sex and sexuality outside the formal setting and may also be accessing pornography.

Laws, policies and regulations
It is also important to have a better understanding of the existing laws and policies on the sexual behaviour of young people, including the first age of sexual intercourse, the difference between young men/women, sexual orientation, sexual practices and access to SRH services. Often CSE programmes do not include laws. This can lead to social norms being confused with the actual laws.

Try to find out what the laws and policies in your country say about:

- Age of consent to have sexual intercourse (is it similar for boys and girls?)
- Age of marriage
- Access to contraception; parental/spousal consent
- Abortion and post-abortion care
- Homosexuality/transgender
- GBV

When you know these, you can find out how these policies differ from the beliefs and social norms in your community and where they are similar. CSE programmers may also think customs and norms are the same as laws. For example, they may assume that there is a law that prohibits unmarried girls from having access to SRH services because they feel it is against the social norms. However it may be the law. The laws on age of consent may create indirect barriers to young people's access to SRH services. CSE programmers need to keep in mind that laws on sexuality issues are often based on religious values or norms. For example, homosexuality is still illegal in many countries. This makes this topic and discussion of LGBTIQ even more challenging to address in the classroom. As a programmer, it is important to explain the laws and discuss the complexity of an issue and to focus on fairness, tolerance and solidarity. Another example is abortion. Sometimes, people assume that if abortion is not easy to access that it is 'illegal'. However, abortion is only completely banned in all circumstances in very few countries. Post-abortion care is not illegal anywhere.

Implementation setting

It is helpful to get more information on the challenges and opportunities that exist where the CSE programme will be implemented. How willing are all the stakeholders, i.e. (school) management, parents, community members, and young people? What is already available regarding sexuality/life skills or other education? Who will be the educators facilitators of the programme? What is their motivation or resistance to implementing the programme? (Rutgers, 2016) What are the opportunities and possibilities for them to be trained in the programme?

Risk assessment

You need to consider any possible backlash you could face from those who oppose CSE and how you can prepare yourself for that. Furthermore, we need to ensure that no learners, including young LGBTIQ, will be put in danger or will be at risk during or after the CSE lessons.

Supporting guidance:
Plans Global Policy on Safeguarding

Role of young people

When learners participate (Standard 5) in researching youth sexuality issues, they become more aware of the common values, injustices and violations of the sexual and reproductive rights of young people in their communities. This awareness can lead to individual and group actions such as discussing issues relating to SRHR with family, friends and other social contacts (directly and through social media).

Example practical activity:

As part of an assignment, young people can collect and write stories about sexuality in the community.They can find out what positive and negative stories exist about sexuality and

CSE in the community by talking to relevant stakeholders. You can help to identify these stakeholders. You can then use their findings in your CSE lessons and discuss them together. Be sure to reward them by first letting them present the lessons they have learned. (Rutgers/IPPF, 2013).

HOW CAN THE DATA IMPROVE CSE PROGRAMMING?

The content and, especially the behavioural messages, in the CSE programme are stronger when they make use of all the information gathered during the preliminary work. The content and messages can fit and connect to the age, sexual experience, family and community values, social circumstances and the culture of young people. Research also indicates that making the behavioural messages more context-specific contributes to a better understanding of the link between the messages and the behaviour (Kirby, 2002). While a context-specific or culturally sensitive approach respects the cultural characteristics of sexuality, at the same time it offers evidence-informed and gender transformative information and promotes critical thinking and empowerment for self-determination among learners.

It is important to find the right balance between the SRHR of young people and their realities and the values and norms of the community they live in. However, **to be contextually relevant does not mean that you cannot address certain issues, including sexual diversity,** even when people say that it does not exist in their country/community. When translating the data into a CSE programme, it is important to realise that changes in cultural values and norms can be an important factor in

any community. It is important to know about potentially competing needs in the community due to large-scale changes, e.g. access to social media or political changes in the country.

HOW DOES IT WORK IN PRACTICE?

CSE programmes should strengthen values about sexuality and sexual wellbeing from a sexual rights perspective and should be based on evidence-informed guidance. At the same time, this may pose challenges in some cultures and for some religious groups. It is only through dialogue that we can begin to address these complex issues. CSE programmers may feel pressured to choose between acknowledging the complexities of sexuality and relationships and upholding long-held traditions and beliefs at the heart of their community. CSE needs to address much broader aspects than personal behaviours or beliefs. Effective educational interventions involve challenging social, political, economic and religious structures, systems and inequalities that affect women, youth and marginalised groups. CSE programmes must find common ground between cultural and sex-positive values, e.g. dignity, equality, respect and compassion. All faiths have similar values, including the health and wellbeing of children, adolescents, and young people, and can bring people together.

✓ TIPS

- If a certain issue, like sexual diversity, is difficult to address, be clear what the alternative is from the contextual or religious point of view. For example, concerning sexual diversity, this can include values around compassion and respect for all. Concerning unwanted pregnancy, the argument of having love and aspirations for the future for our children could be used. Even if there are negative cultural or religious beliefs around sexuality, the programme still needs to explain sexuality in a neutral, clear, respectful, complete, professional and academic way.

- Keep in mind that there is a wide diversity of sexual practices–some of which change across time and contexts–and which are influenced by many factors like technology for instance. Have these discussions with young people with young people in a confidential and friendly, non-judgmental manner.

- Do not hide behind culture. The fact that something is considered part of the culture does not mean it is acceptable or good. It should not in any way violate fundamental rights such as access to health and information or freedom of expression.

- Share with learners what the laws are in your country and what the difference is between laws and social norms.

- Finding common ground between faith and sex-positive values of dignity and equality, respect and compassion are vital.

CSE provides clear, comprehensive, accurate, non-judgmental information and includes substantive discussions on sex, sexuality, relationships and consent, contraceptive choices and abortion care.

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) states that all young people have the right to complete and evidence-based information, to participation and protection. CSE needs to take the needs and rights of all young people seriously. It needs to ensure that they know their rights and that they are actively involved and empowered to make informed decisions. Many programmes provide information on sexual and reproductive health to adolescents and young people. Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) is slightly different in that it is a systematic, curriculum-based process of transferring knowledge, attitudes and skills on a comprehensive range of subjects related to sexuality. CSE also means providing this knowledge with clear messages, in a manner that is easy to understand and non-judgmental – i.e. you provide accurate and scientific information and facts, without imposing your values on the learners. CSE needs to be evidence-informed to counter any myths and misconceptions that learners and their communities may have regarding sexuality.
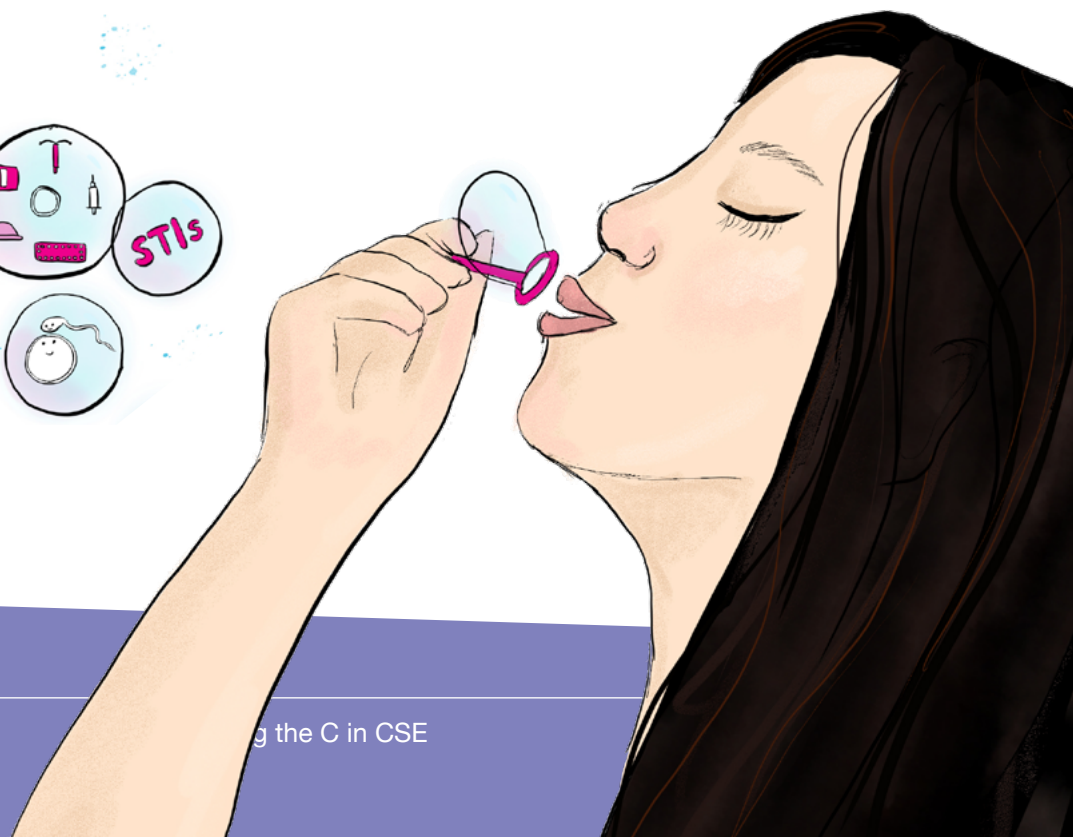
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

CSE is evidence-informed

This means that the content of the programme is based on scientific facts from informed research about SRHR. Evidence about effective CSE states that the curriculum should be designed by sex education experts in consultation with the community and the young people whom you intend to reach. The content needs to be grounded in the realities of their lives. This evidence also states that messages should be clear and precise. For example, if you tell learners to wear condoms, explain exactly how, where and why they should wear a condom, preferably demonstrating the correct method of using a condom (WHO, 2013). Other evidence states that while CSE should be culturally relevant and age-and context-appropriate, this does not mean avoiding sensitive issues like contraception, including emergency contraception, and abortion, including post-abortion care. It means that you strive to provide the most comprehensive information for learners that helps them clarify their values, understand the choices available, and make decisions that are good for them (Veugelers, 2001).

We have clear evidence that abstinence-only or abstinence-based education is ineffective, while CSE that promotes a positive view of sexuality and aims to enable learners to achieve ideal sexual experiences is more effective (UNESCO, 2018 a). You need to show you are comfortable about talking openly and positively about sexuality, sex and relationships, and what consent means. Once learners see that you are confident and comfortable with these issues, they will realise that they can trust you to give them correct information and are less likely to laugh or be embarrassed themselves. You also need to

be respectful of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and sexual activities so that all kinds of learners feel accepted and able to ask question.

ABSTINENCE

Sexual relationships between young people (who are not married) remain a very contentious issue in many settings. Abstinence is still seen as an important–sometimes the only–behavioural message in a CSE programme due to prevailing cultural norms. In theory, abstinence is 100 per cent effective at preventing pregnancy and STIs. However, worldwide, many young people who intend to practise abstinence fail to do so, and they often also fail to use condoms or other forms of contraception when they do have intercourse. Considerable scientific evidence accumulated over the past 20 years has found that abstinence-only programmes are not effective at preventing pregnancy or STIs, nor do they have a positive impact on age at first sexual intercourse, on the number of sexual partners, or other behaviours (Santelli et al., 2017).

Research in Africa shows that abstinence messages do not have much effect on the attitudes of young people, especially not on boys (Guttmacher, 2017). There are many ways for sexual relations to be presented in a CSE programme. To avoid encountering resistance, and to assure the community that the CSE programme is not promoting "inappropriate" behaviour, it may not be enough to use facts and international studies. Awareness-raising and open, respectful dialogues with the community may help greater acceptance for discussing sexuality and sexual relationships. To introduce CSE content in culturally appropriate ways may require adapting the language, the way messages are delivered, or the mechanisms for involving specific sections of the population.

CSE is non-judgmental

A non-judgmental approach in CSE means that educators and learners can have their own opinions and values and should not be judged for having these. It also means that values cannot be imposed. One of the essential elements of CSE is to explore personal values and ethical issues, for example, regarding certain sexual practices, pre-marital sex, sexual diversity and abortion. CSE, like any other education, cannot exist without values and ethics. Plan International includes human rights, gender equity, kindness, democracy, embracing diversity, respect and dignity for all genders and identities as important values as a part of CSE.

The information supplied should be non-judgmental – that is, based on factually correct information to which no values are attached. It is important to separate values from the information provided because an essential goal of CSE is for young people to develop their values based on all the information given. Often values are presented as facts and are stated as 'it is' instead of 'it should be'. Educators should consciously avoid conveying their own values about topics like abortion or sexual diversity, even though it's clear that personal views and values exist. Everyone needs to feel safe and free to express their values without being judged by anyone else in the room.

Learners can be encouraged to support their values with arguments, by continuously asking:

> Why do you think so? Can you explain that?

Most importantly, values should not be stated as facts. Both educators and learners need to understand the difference between facts and values – not always easy to do.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF CSE FOR LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS?

FOR EDUCATORS

BENEFITS	CHALLENGES
Improved relationship with the learners	You need to build your comfort and confidence
By responding to learners' realities, you can help them address their challenges	You need to learn all the facts and distinguish them from your own values or the values of the community
You will be able to report better outcomes from your CSE programmes	Community members may be uncomfortable with some of the topics you want to discuss with learners if you do not prepare them for this in advance

FOR LEARNERS

BENEFITS	CHALLENGES
Learners receive correct and comprehensive information on sex, sexuality, relationships, consent, contraception, abortion and more	Learners may feel shy or uncomfortable discussing some of these topics in a group
Learners can ask all kinds of questions freely without worrying about being judged	Learners need to be able to trust their educator
Learners can get clear information on the services available to them	

HOW DOES IT WORK IN PRACTICE?

As educator, you may find it difficult to talk frankly and openly about many aspects of sexuality due to socio-cultural norms, legal barriers or lack of correct in formation (Standard 11). Only by tackling the full range of topics will CSE truly enable learners to develop the attitudes and skills they need to take charge of their bodies, fertility, sexual activity – and to be able to freely decide whether, when and with whom they want to have sex or have children with.

With this in mind, you need to do the following:

- Have CSE content that is based on scientific evidence, and that covers the full range of topics including sex, sexuality, relationships and consent, contraception and abortion. These must be in line with agreed Plan International CSE topics and include a focus on attitudes and skills development as well as knowledge.
- Ensure it is inclusive and respectful of diversity and non-judgmental of gender and sexuality.
- Ensure it does not include abstinence-only approaches or fear-based messages which have been proven to be ineffective.
- Promote rights around sexuality and sexual health and the inherent influence of gender and power (Plan 2018)
- Provide information on the full range of contraceptive choices and the ones that are available to them, including emergency contraception, safe abortion where legal, and post-abortion care in the event of unintended pregnancy.

To do all this, you should familiarise yourself with the data on SRHR of adolescents and young people in the community that you are reaching (Standard 1).

You will also need to familiarise yourself with all the information and content of the topics that you need to cover. Practice the teaching methods, and discuss difficult topics with colleagues, friends and family so that you become more comfortable when talking about them. Try to get several different perspectives on them and aim to provide facts in a non-judgmental manner. Where possible, make links with organisations working on sexual diversity and networks of sexual rights activists to learn more about their realities, the language and terminology they use, and their key advocacy messages. Create referral linkages with youth-friendly, and adolescent and gender-responsive SRH services so that you can refer your learners to them if needed (Standard 13).

DIGITAL SEXUALITY EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

Young people all over the world are the most active users of digital technologies. Young people's engagement in 'digital spaces' is diverse, changes continuously, and is gender - and context - specific. Digital spaces can be formal or explicitly labelled digital delivery sites and pathways for sexuality education. For example, some websites, apps and chatrooms have emerged with the explicit intention of educating young people about sexuality. Young people also engage with information about bodies, sex and relationships through influencers or apps, which may be packaged with a range of other content (including commercial content) and may or may not explicitly aim to educate. Digital media can reach excluded groups such as young people in rural areas, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people, and people with disabilities. However, digital media may also present obstacles in reaching these groups, due to stigmatising content, technological barriers and risks of exposure Digital sexuality education can have impacts on knowledge, attitudes and behaviours. But few interventions monitor impact and those that do have diverse content, goals, indicators and theories of behaviour change, and are measured at different times, making it hard to compare impacts or reach generalisable conclusions. Also, the platforms through which digital sexuality education is delivered are changing rapidly and the evidence base cannot develop at the same speed.

Digital sexuality education can be enjoyable and is widely found to be appealing to young people. Sexuality education online can create opportunities for young people to help design initiatives that can make them more responsive to young peoples' needs, as well as help young people develop valuable digital knowledge skills they need and desire. Online interventions are thought to be more cost-effective and far-reaching than offline, but this is difficult to quantify. Some studies try to compare school-based and digital sexuality education impacts. Many find digital education more impactful; however, comparisons are not meaningful if the content and quality vary (e.g. a great teacher is probably more impactful than a not-so-great digital game, and vice versa). Many interventions combine digital education with education in schools or other offline spaces.

(UNESCO 2020. Switched on: Sexuality education in the digital space)
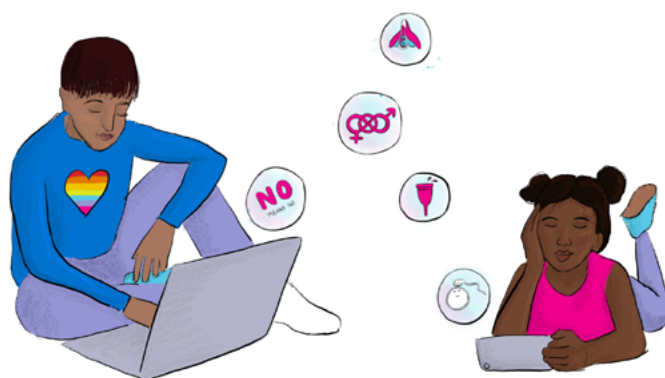
✓ TIPS

- Ensure that you don't mix facts with values. Remember that you will need to re-examine your values and beliefs around sex, sexuality, relationships, consent, contraception and abortion, and allow learners to develop their own.
- You should treat differences in values respectfully and professionally. It is appropriate for sexuality educators to explore different belief systems, through classroom discussions, sensitively and respectfully.

- You need to know and understand the legal positions related to sexuality, sexual orientation, gender and gender identity before making statements on whether something is allowed in your country. In Plan's CSE topic tables (see CSE Standards toolbox), the section on Values, Rights, Culture and Sexuality gives clear guidance on how to make a distinction between facts and values, and social norms and laws.

- You do not need to agree with or share the same values as the learners. However, you must respect the values and attitudes of learners or actions based on these and be careful not to impose your values and attitudes on the behaviour of learners. The only exception to this is when a person is engaging in illegal or potentially harmful or dangerous behaviour.

- You may need to reflect on your perspective about young people's sexuality – i.e. if you believe that they need to be fearful of sex and abstain until marriage, you will need to understand why it is important to provide young people with a positive view of sexuality, which enables them to enjoy their

bodies and enhances their sexual wellbeing (Standard 8). While it may be a good idea for young people to delay sexual intercourse for as long as possible, young people are not homogenous. They all have different life circumstances and may be at different life stages, which you may not be aware of. It is important therefore to allow them to make their judgments about their sexual lives while providing them with all the information and skills they will need.

- If you find a topic too difficult to discuss, then let other colleagues who are more comfortable with those areas address them with your learners.

- You may notice that there are gaps in your curriculum, and these should be addressed according to international standards, e.g. on safe abortion care, sexual diversity or any other sensitive issue. Try to discuss this with your colleagues or find examples of curricula/guidelines that address these issues, e.g. It's All One Curriculum (Pop Council) in a culturally sensitive way.

CSE contributes to transforming unequal gender power relations relations through substantive discussions on gender, power and identity to challenge harmful norms and practices and other forms of gender-based violence (GBV).

INTRODUCTION

Unequal gender norms and attitudes towards sexual diversity are widespread, regardless of geography and socio-cultural settings, and these crystallise during early adolescence (Blum et al., 2017). The issues of gender and sexual diversity are often neglected or are only superficially addressed in CSE. Gender roles, orientation and identity play a key role in increasing vulnerability to unwanted pregnancy and STIs. Notions of masculinity often condone multiple sexual partnerships and unsafe sexual practices, such as sex without a condom (Haberland, 2016). Since these gender norms reinforce different expectations from girls and boys, with social sanctions if they do not conform, it is important to address them as early as possible. This can be done through:

- open discussions on gender norms and attitudes that take into account young people's evolving capacities;
- stimulating critical reflection to change attitudes and norms within peer groups;
- school-based/ organizational efforts to promote equitable gender norms.

These kinds of interventions need to be accompanied by incorporating content on gender-equitable norms in parenting interventions and by working to change norms at different layers of influence in the society on children, adolescents, and young people's lives, i.e. parents and family members, school or health services, community leaders and local government authorities, national-level laws and policies, etc. (Chandra-Mouli et al., 2017).

HARMFUL GENDER NORMS

KEY DEFINITIONS:

Gender: The concept of gender refers to the beliefs, expectations and norms about the roles, relations and values attributed to girls and boys, women and men. These expectations and norms are socially constructed; they are neither invariable nor are they biologically determined, and they can change over time. Gender is constructed, and reconstructed, through the interaction between families and friends, in schools and communities, and through the media, government and religious organisations.

Gender identity: the personal sense of one's gender. The innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both, or neither–how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.

Gender expression: the external appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behaviour, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviours and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.

Transgender: An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.

Gender equality: Gender equality means that all persons, regardless of their gender, enjoy the same status in society; have the same entitlements to all human rights; enjoy the same level of respect in the community; can take advantage of the same opportunities to make choices about their lives, and have the same amount of power to shape the outcomes of these choices. Gender equality does not mean that women and men, or girls and boys are the same. Women and men, girls and boys, and individuals with other gender identities have different but related needs and priorities, face different constraints, and enjoy different opportunities.

Gender transformative approach: this approach actively examines, questions, and changes rigid gender norms and imbalances of power. By transforming harmful, inequitable gender norms and values into positive ones, we improve the sexual and reproductive rights and health of all, prevent gender-based violence (GBV), and increase gender equality. To improve SRHR outcomes for all and to prevent GBV, we must address negative sexual and gender norms and transform them into positive ones. Harmful gender norms and values are root causes of gender inequality and, therefore, also of poor SRHR outcomes. Addressing these norms at the individual, institutional and societal level improves inequalities and facilitates sustainable social change.

GENDER AND A GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH

The binary approach to gender, often used in CSE, ignores its complexity; the classification of gender into male and female does not encompass individuals who are born with non-binary reproductive organs (intersex) and excludes those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer and genderfluid, or as the third gender.

Supporting material, video:
"Sexual orientation? gender identity? What's the difference?"

All sexual relations take place within a social context. Gender norms affect both males' and females' perceptions of the acceptability of using violence to control girls' and women's mobility, decision making and friendships, as well as the circumstances, timing and safety of sexual relations. Girls and boys often internalise these norms very early in life, laying a foundation for unequal sexual relations. There is a correlation between inequitable gender norms and the experience of violence. For example, people who agree that there are circumstances under which it is acceptable to be beaten by their partner, are more likely to report having experienced violence themselves.

Gender transformative approaches tackle the root causes of gender inequality, particularly unequal power relations between persons of different genders, discriminatory social norms and legislation. The goal is not only to make the learners aware of the gender inequality in their situations, but also to support learners to think about methods and ways to change these unequal situations and improve the daily condition of girls, and to advance girls' position and value in society. In fact, such approaches aim to free all people from harmful and destructive norms including gender roles, expectations, stereotypes and harmful attitudes, customs and practices. Adhering to harmful gender norms results in gender-based violence, less likelihood of contraceptive or condom use, low power of girls and women in sexual relationships, resulting in higher rates of STIs and HIV. Therefore, gender and power matter for sexual and reproductive health behaviour and outcomes across gender norms of masculinity, femininity and equality, power in sexual relationships, and intimate partner violence (Haberland, 2015). Plan has developed guidance to explain gender transformative programming and influencing, which helps understand gender-transformative CSE programming.

Supporting materials: Plan's Global Policy on Gender Equality and Inclusion Policy, Gender-transformative Technical Guidance Note

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES TO USING A GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH IN CSE?

Benefits
Evaluations of different CSE programmes around the world have shown that those specifically addressing gender and power lead to significant decreases in adverse health outcomes like pregnancy, childbearing or STIs (ibid.). Boys have demonstrated changed behaviour at home, doing more household chores and advocating for their sisters' education and against child marriage. This leads to more satisfying and less violent relationships between boys and girls, and a higher feeling of mental and physical wellbeing

among the girls. They also engaged in discussions on these issues within the family and with friends and neighbours (Lundgren et al., 2013).

Girls, who received life skills training on gender, on how to enjoy sexual relationships, on rights and negotiation, critical thinking and decision-making skills were 31 per cent less likely to be married as children compared to girls who did not receive such training (Amin et al., 2016). Learners receiving CSE and life skills education interventions to foster more gender-equitable norms were more likely to support equal access to education for boys and girls, openly express opposition to gender-based violence, have positive attitudes regarding the importance of consent in all sexual relationships and what constitutes good and bad relationships (Holden et al., 2015). Thus, there are significant benefits for learners (both girls and boys) and for their communities to using gender transformative approaches in CSE and to addressing gender and power to challenge harmful norms and practices.

Challenges

Challenges may arise for learners when the CSE programme doesn't address sexuality for girls in a similar way as it does for boys. Boys and girls have the same desires and sexual feelings, but they are most of the time denied or not addressed.

A challenge might be that some lessons that promote gender equality focus only on supporting the rights of girls. In these cases, boys get the impression that there are only advantages for the girls and some boys do not see what they will gain from "giving up" their rights. Educators should be aware of this and explain to boys how they can benefit as well from challenging gender norms–i.e.

that improving the emotional, physical and economic situation of girls will lead also to a better situation for boys and men.

If the CSE programme does not engage with learners' families and communities to create an enabling environment for change to take place, learners may be put in a position where they want to challenge harmful norms around masculinity and femininity, but their community members are not ready to listen to them. Such a situation may put learners at risk of censure, discipline and in some cases violence within their community; it may also affect learners' ability to truly question harmful norms. Challenges for educators include prevailing over their cultural values around gender and gender identity to provide a gender transformative experience for learners. If the educator does not have an in-depth understanding and critical analysis of gender, they will not be able to go far enough to transform gender relations. Also, if gender is only taught as a standalone module, rather than being integrated throughout the curriculum with messages around how to achieve equality, it may be less effective.

HOW DOES IT WORK IN PRACTICE?

Eliminating institutional sexism in school. Addressing gender and power and have a gender transformative approach in CSE, means that institutional sexism inside and outside the school needs to be eliminated. To do that, you need to understand it. Sexism refers to the acceptance of stereotypes or negative messages based on sex, which is personally internalized or assumed by others. One of the ways it can manifest in a school is through denial or discouraging access to certain parts of the curriculum, e.g. girls' access to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The school focus specifically on the issue of power relationships and how it will address these in its policies and practice. Such a school maximizes the potential of every learner, especially of girls.

A review (Haberland, 2015) of rigorous evaluations of HIV and sexuality education interventions explored whether the inclusion of gender and power mattered in programme efficacy. From this, the following key aspects have been identified for successful programmes to approach gender and power.

Explicit attention must be paid to gender or power in relationships. The curriculum should include sessions that explain what gender, sex and sexuality mean, including gender identity and expression; social norms and values around gender, gender roles and expectations, and the fact that these are always changing; consequences of gender bias, gender-based discrimination, stereotypes and inequality, including self-stigma; concepts of masculinity and femininity; the role of all this within relationships, either in the family or romantic or sexual.

Fostering critical thinking about how gender norms or power manifest and operate. The curriculum should enable learners to examine their local context critically and analyse the dynamics of gender norms and power structures around them, including in the media, through harmful practices like CEFMU or FGM/C, in relationships where there are large age differences or economic dependence, and in expressions of masculinity or femininity within relationships. CSE sessions need to help learners to look at individual behaviour change as well as wider social change. Discussions are not focused only on individual behaviours but use a holistic and broad perspective to look at learners' relationships within their social context.

Fostering personal reflection. The curriculum and the educators need to make space for the learners to be able to reflect upon and apply these questions to their own lives by using exercises, games, case studies or other methodologies, to think about how power and gender expectations work in their own lives and in their relationships, including concerning contraceptive and condom use, and intimate partner violence.

Valuing oneself and recognising one's power. Finally, but most importantly, the programme must enable learners to see themselves as agents of change with the power to make a positive impact on their own lives and relationships, among their families and community, and their larger socio-cultural milieu. This includes building a sense of self-worth, self-respect and agency among learners, especially those most marginalised and vulnerable due to gender norms, like girls and young women, those with diverse gender identities and sexual orientations, and those who have undergone violence in their homes or communities.

Content and delivery of CSE

Messages should be based upon principles of gender equality and avoid reinforcing negative gender stereotypes that are often harmful to both girls and boys. Educators need to model gender-equitable language and behaviour, both during and outside delivering CSE sessions. Sessions need to address sexuality and the physical and emotional aspects of sexual relations in a similar way for girls and boys. For example, boys need to understand how girls can enjoy sexual relationships.

> Example: In more traditional CSE, first sexual experiences for girls are often linked with warnings and myths about losing their virginity, while there are not the same words/expressions for boys. CSE should eventually go beyond the myth-busting of virginity (e.g. linking the hymen with sexual activity). It should no longer use the word and explain more about how first sexual experiences for both boys and girls can be safe and enjoyable.

In CSE youth sexting is often portrayed as a form of bullying, or as having the potential to involve or lead to bullying This may take the form of interpersonal practices as well victim-blaming, shaming, harassment, and abuse. For example, girls are being blamed when they are pro-active seeking contact, engage in conversations about sex online or show their body. These practices should also be addressed in terms of gender and sexual stereotypes and inequalities, and peer group power dynamics and hierarchies.

Sessions relating to harmful practices and other forms of gender-based violence should be carefully and sensitively facilitated, recognising that young people in the group may be directly affected by these issues. Opportunities to follow up privately with CSE educators or relevant Plan International staff must be provided.

Teachers and educators need to be aware that some CSE programmes include examples of 'victim-blaming'; for example including scenario's, whereby a girl goes to a party or is dressed in a certain way and is sexually abused or raped. And the underlying message is that she has provoked it. By not addressing this kind of gender inequality, educators miss out the opportunity to educate learners with the concept of sexual consent (standard 4).

The CSE programme needs to address the heightened vulnerability of marginalised and excluded young people to violence, including young LGBTIQ people, those with disabilities, girls in extreme poverty and young people in conflict-affected areas. This could include creating a "safe space" intervention.

✓ TIPS

- Gender and power should be woven into all parts of the programme–the finalised curriculum, teaching content, teaching methods (participatory, positive, non-judgmental), classroom environment–and also into the organisational/school policies and the organisational/school ethos (UNFPA, 2015).

- Think about the concepts of masculinity and femininity in your society. Strict gender norms, sexism and other forms of prejudices, stereotypes, discrimination and violence can limit the development and possibilities for sexual expression of all young people (particularly of girls and young women). Gender norms, therefore have a strong influence on why, whether and when a person wants to have sex–their sexual motivation.

- Because of gender norms, sexuality can have a very different meaning for boys and girls. For example, for girls, the first sexual interaction is often linked with anxiety and questions like: "Should I do it?", "When should I say yes or no?". For boys, other issues are important, like: "How will I do it?". Boys may also have the feeling that they have to do it otherwise they are not a man.

- The position and status of different gender identities need to be considered. Messages should emphasise that girls are capable, and can be in control, both generally and more specifically by learning how to enjoy sex, how to resist unwanted or unprotected sex and to insist on condom use, safety and their enjoyment. Work with boys includes teaching them to share their emotions and understand what empathy means. Skills for boys include to "put themselves in the girl's position", to understand how sexual enjoyment works for girls, to share their emotions and insecurities, and to be respectful of themselves and girls. Both boys and girls need to get a deeper understanding of what sexual consent is.

- Demystify myths around gender and sexuality, including that girls enjoy sex less than boys. Be aware that there are practically no differences between boys and girls about sexual desire, excitement and sexual needs. It is the society that creates these differences.

- Sexuality educators need to be aware of their gender! This can impact the way that participants learn. Educators may also have different attitudes and expectations towards female and male learners.

- Be aware that, besides the existing interpersonal interactions in the school/organisation, textbooks and reading materials used in learning can encourage the formation of gender stereotypes. Textbooks often concentrate on men's experiences and interests, while women are marginalised and less visible, or are presented in a traditional, stereotyped way that reinforces existing prejudices.

CSE addresses sex and sexuality from a holistic perspective, looking at positive experiences such as pleasure, rather than focusing on negative ones such as risks and fear.

INTRODUCTION

Until recently CSE programmes were predominantly informed by a public health lens, focused largely on unintended pregnancy and STI/HIV prevention objectives. While prevention remains key, Plan International believes CSE also should support children and young people to be confident in their ability to make and maintain positive relationships, both face-to-face and online, to be able to identify and articulate emotions and manage new or difficult situations positively. Therefore, CSE should address sexuality and sexual relationships not only from a risk perspective but also include positive and pleasurable aspects.
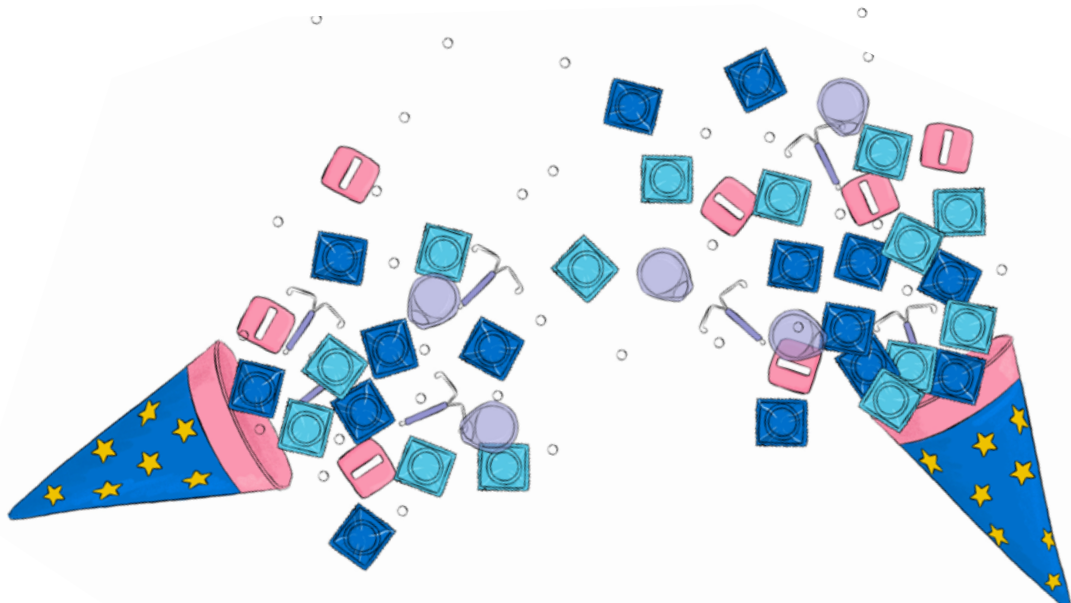
SEXUALITY

This is the World Health Organization (WHO) definition of sexuality:

> " ... a central aspect of being human throughout life encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors. (WHO, 2006) "

WHAT IS A "SEX-POSITIVE" APPROACH?

Although there is no universal definition of sexual pleasure, a good starting point for describing "sex-positive" approaches is:

> An attitude that celebrates sexuality as an enhancing part of life that brings happiness, energy and celebration. Sex-positive approaches strive to achieve ideal experiences, rather than solely working to prevent negative experiences. At the same time, sex-positive approaches acknowledge and tackle the various risks associated with sexuality, without reinforcing fear, shame or taboo of young people's sexuality.

A sex-positive approach is closely linked with comprehensive, rights-based and gender transformative approaches in CSE programmes (Standards 3 and 5). In its broadest sense, sex positivity is the idea that all sex, as long as it is consensual, is a positive thing. Sexual pleasure is the feeling we get when we are sexually aroused. Sex positivity and pleasure are distinct concepts. They can exist independently of each other and are also overlapping.

Sex-positive CSE ultimately aims to support children, adolescents, and young people to achieve sexual wellbeing for themselves, and to realise their sexual rights and the rights of others. A focus on pleasurable, positive sexual experiences can help to open discussions towards safer sexual behaviours and stronger negotiation skills. However, a sex-positive approach does not replace the information and discussion about the possible negative outcomes of sex; instead, it seeks to bring balance and represent the range of sexual experiences that are possible.

Sexual pleasure and sexual wellbeing have an impact on sexual and reproductive health and social change. For example, CSE can provide an important forum for building solidarity between young people with varying degrees of access to privileges and sexual rights, including LGBTIQ and young people with disabilities. It can also strengthen active citizenship skills for working towards a culture that is more just and equal when it comes to sexuality.

Educators of younger children (i.e. below the age of 15) can find a sex-positive approach to CSE challenging due to socio-cultural taboos a round discussing sexuality openly. One way to explain sex-positive CSE to educators of younger children could be to use the comparison of learning to swim or learning to

ride a bike. As a parent or teacher, usually, you explain why swimming and riding a bike can be enjoyable and fun. As well as the risks – such as starting too early (when you're not ready for it or too young) or in unsafe places or without wearing a helmet when cycling.

CONSENT

If you don't want it and you are forced to do it, it is not sex-it is sexual violence. CSE must explain that people wanting to engage in a sexual encounter must agree to the sex that they want to have. Consent can be expressed with or without words. How people give consent differs. But if someone does not say "No", it does not automatically mean "Yes". If in doubt whether a sexual partner likes a sexual act, ask them if they want it or if this is making them feel good. Consent is also ongoing: if someone says "Yes" today, this does not automatically apply for what happens next week. Someone may like something at first, but not want to continue a few minutes later. You always have to listen and respect the feelings and decision of the person who is 'not into it' any more.

Consent can be withdrawn at any time.

DIGITAL SEX

Sex does not always take place in one physical space; it can also happen digitally. It is about voluntarily sharing (private) photos, videos or texts of a sexual nature. This is increasingly a part of sexual contact between (young) people all over the world. The advantage is that you can find online connection with like-minded people, but the disadvantage is that you can come into contact with violent or unwanted ones, with porn that perpetuates stereotypes, or with a digital environment that discriminates and is abusive. CSE programmes mainly focus on the dangerous sides of digital sex. However, digital spaces can provide access to information, that young people cannot find elsewhere. Social media also allows them to discuss personal issues with others, including sexual topics. They can practice communicating about sex. CSE needs honest and complete information about how young people can use social media or other online spaces, how they can enjoy these and identify credible sources of information, how they can remain safe and what to do if they are being abused online.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN IN PRACTICE?

RISK-BASED APPROACH	POSITIVE APPROACH
Focuses messages solely on HIV, STIs, unintended pregnancy, and other unwanted consequences of sexual activity.	Includes messaging on sexuality as a source of pleasure and wellbeing for everyone and highlights the importance of achieving ideal sexual experience.
Does not take into account the importance of understanding why people have sex, including to experience pleasure or to enjoy each other.	Recognises that sexual pleasure is an important reason why people have sex and that pleasure determines how we make decisions in our sex lives.
Reinforces fear or shame as the main motivator for people to use sexual protection, e.g. if you have sex without a condom, you will get HIV, so you'd better use a condom.	Actively promotes pleasure as a key ingredient for people to practise safer sex and use protection.
Discusses only medical biological information about these unintended consequences, such as symptoms, testing and treatment.	Promotes reflection and discussion on the links between sexual pleasure and sexual health, such as self-determination, consent, privacy, safety, communication, diversity, negotiation and confidence.
Reinforces traditional beliefs that can fuel stigma around sexuality in the process of providing education, counselling and information to young people or assessing a young person's situation.	Promotes normalising messages about sexual pleasure within a sexual health and human (sexual) rights framework.

CSE programmes need to include the following points:

• How young people can navigate their sexual behaviour and decisions. Whether they can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent. Making them able to identify how inequality, including gender and LGBTIQ inequality, can affect personal and sexual freedom and wellbeing. Ensuring they have a realistic view of their appearance and are critically aware of how sexually explicit media presents an unreal picture of sexual behaviour, and how gender norms and stereotypes can normalise violent or non-consensual behaviour (Standard 11).

• Explaining how physical aspects of sexuality work, including arousal, desire, and orgasm, with information on different ways to enjoy sex together or alone.

• How children, adolescents, and young people can take responsibility for their physical, and emotional sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing. CSE needs to give young people the ability to weigh up the positive pleasures and understand the risks of a range of sexual behaviours; to use communication, negotiation and assertiveness skills to challenge and prevent behaviours that may limit safe choices or create unwanted sexual pressure.

• Improving young people's confidence regarding sex and sexuality. Sexual confidence is a state of mind. Like any form of confidence, sexual confidence is reinforced by information, knowledge and skills; it is also supported by positive thinking, and by the ability to talk to other people about sex and sexuality in a context-free from stigma and shame.

• Creating a shared culture free from coercive factors such as shame and stigma. Solidarity is also built through recognising that some people face more challenges in fully realising their sexuality and human rights.

• Helping young people to find credible information about sex and sexuality online, while staying safe.

✓ TIPS

- Prepare yourself to talk about sexual wellbeing and sexual enjoyment.

- Reflect on your values and experiences. Ask yourself, what are the dominant attitudes or "rules" in the communities where you live and work concerning sexuality, sex, marriage, condoms, pornography, sexual pleasure, female sexuality or same-sex relationships? Who decides the rules? What happens to those who don't stick to the rules? What are the possibilities for living by diverse rules?

- Discussing sex and sexuality does not mean you or the learners should disclose personal experiences. Try to keep the discussion at a more general level.

- Introducing and discussing sexual enjoyment can be difficult because of feelings of shame and embarrassment, you will notice that by practising talking about sex and sexuality will make it easier and it will help learners to feel safe and free to talk about sensitive issues. You can start your CSE lessons by asking questions that allow opinions to be shared without self-disclosure. For example: Who do you think is responsible for preventing unwanted pregnancy? What do you think?

- Some of your learners may have had distressing sexual experiences, which they may never have shared with anyone. If they remember those during the lessons, they can feel vulnerable. Explain that bad experiences could have happened to learners in the group and that everyone has the right to remain silent. Also, offer confidential support outside the CSE sessions.

- Be "sex critical": this means critically discussing the dominant social and cultural norms about sexuality and supporting your learners to be critical of these norms too. Being critical doesn't mean that you have to disagree with dominant social norms about sex and sexuality in your community. It means that you need to be able to identify what is seen as "normal" and "abnormal", "good" and "bad" within your community and think about whose interests these categories serve. Who has the power to define what is "normal" and "good"?

- The topic of masturbation can be particularly pertinent for young people, who are starting to explore their sexuality. But it may be a concern for people of all ages, who have heard that masturbation is immoral, sinful or harmful to their physical or mental health. Explain that masturbation can be a positive way to get to know your own body, without risk of STIs or pregnancy. It can help you to understand what you like and be better at communicating this to your partner(s). Also, explain that masturbation is a choice. One can choose to do it (to explore one's own body and feelings) but one can also choose (for whatever reason) not to masturbate. It may also be necessary to address the myths about masturbation, e.g. it will make you sick or blind.

- Explain that penetrative sex can be as pleasurable as non-penetrative/ outercourse sex (outside vagina/anal), for example, mutual masturbation or oral sex. Discuss possible advantages and challenges of engaging in outercourse practices. Underscore various benefits in engaging in outercourse such as being creative and not following common routines of sexual expression and being

responsible for pregnancy prevention and HIV prevention. There are additional emotional psychological benefits of sexually expressing oneself through outercourse if there is the aspiration to delay or not engage in penetrative intercourse (Bakaroudis, 2014).

- It's important to emphasise that you are talking about sexuality and sexual wellbeing of all people–people who aren't just defined by their sexual orientation or gender identity (Standard 9)

- The use of language is critical. Some words and expressions related to sex and sexuality can give negative (subliminal) messages. For example, instead of saying 'indulging in sex', say 'having sex'; instead of using the word 'promiscuous', say 'having multiple partners.' Be aware that many common language expressions are not neutral but carry judgement about gender and norms; try using neutral alternatives to them.

- Be prepared to address the subject of accessing sexually explicit media or porn. Help learners to understand that most mainstream porn is unrealistic and gender-biased. If they want to know how sex works and what it should feel like, they should access more reliable and informative sites like Love Matters – Scarleteen, Laci Green on YouTube, Amaze Org on YouTube, RFSU's ' Sex your own way' booklet, etc.

STANDARD 5: DIVERSITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

CSE emphasises inclusion of adolescents and young people in all their diversity, and provides sensitive, respectful and non-discriminatory messages.

INTRODUCTION

Diversity is an integral part of our lives – for example, in culture, gender, education, faith, HIV status, age and sexual orientation. People can be part of many different groups - you can be young, female, in a refugee camp and deaf or hard of hearing. You can be young, intersex and out-of-school.

CSE learners should develop the following characteristics:curiosity, reflection, collaboration with others, autonomy and creativity. Without putting young people in "boxes", we need to acknowledge the diversity of our learners and find a way to leave no one behind in our CSE programmes.

We need to be as inclusive as possible; however, there may also be times when we need to develop targeted programmes for specific groups of learners in need of special attention.
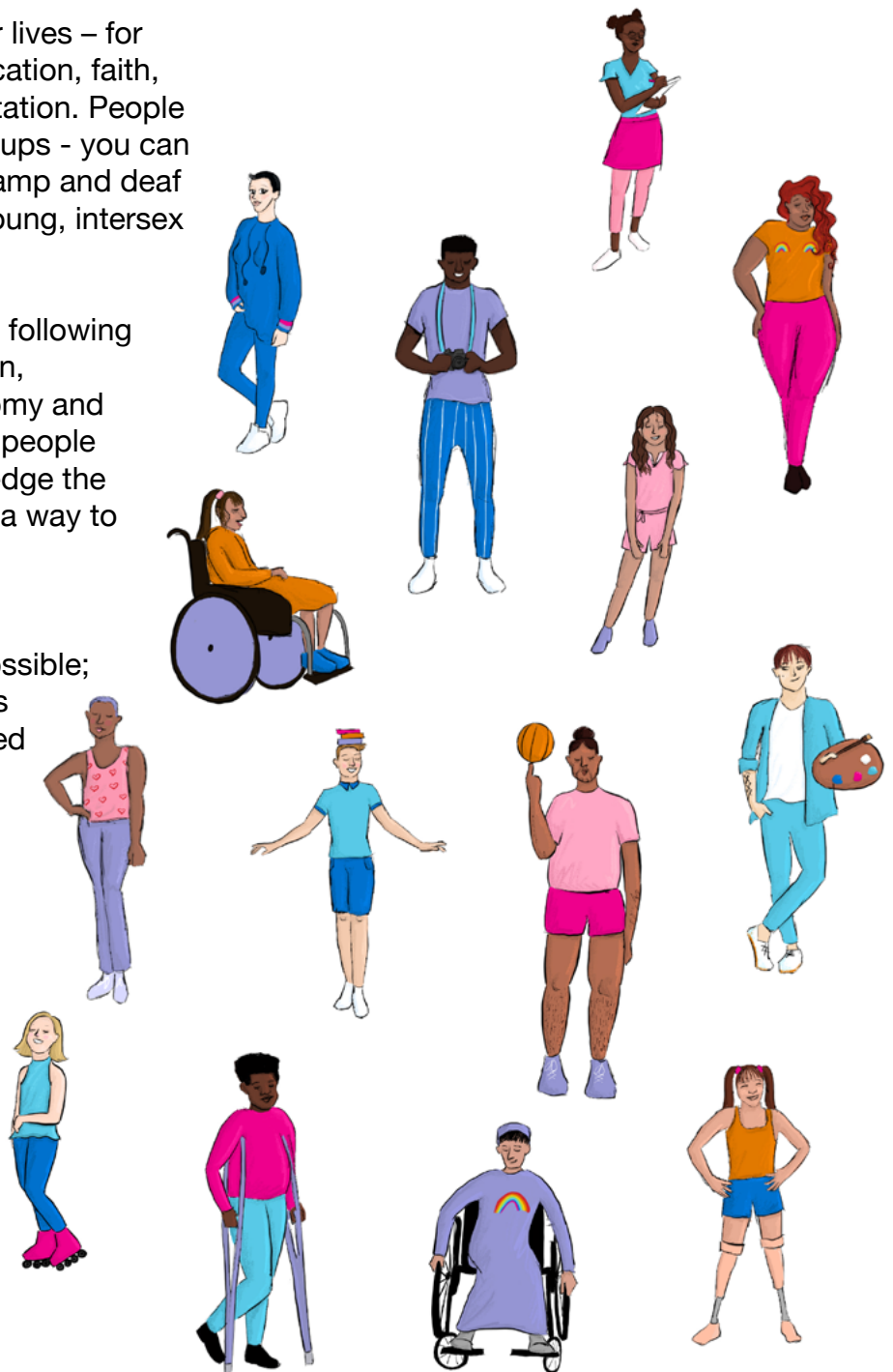
CSE AND SEXUAL DIVERSITY

For a good introduction to sexual diversity, see Plan's International film on the topic:

Supporting materials: Video "Sexual Orientation? Gender Identity What's the Difference?"

Many existing CSE programmes do not discuss sexual diversity or they simply give "additional" information. Often it is assumed that everyone is heterosexual, a man or a woman, and any other orientation or identity is bad or needs explanation. CSE needs to challenge heteronormativity both in discussing topics and through processes.

Sexual diversity is still a very sensitive and even a taboo subject and CSE educators sometimes 'hide' behind the cultural norms and values in their society/community. CSE needs to respect the norms and values of the society community. However, culture and social norms are not static and are constantly changing. CSE promotes human rights, and freedom of (sexual) expression is a human right. It is helpful first to understand what is forbidden and accepted and why. Is something merely frowned upon or are there sanctions against the individual who doesn't conform to norms?

Legal issues versus social norms
Many countries have laws and policies on the sexual behaviour of young people, including the first age of sexual intercourse, the difference between young men/women, sexual orientation, and sexual practices. It is helpful to use national laws and policies and international standards as a baseline for any message and lesson, as learners and educators often don't know enough about the laws. They may confuse social norms with the actual laws. For example, people may assume that there

is a law that prohibits same-sex relationships when in reality this may not be the fact in their country; it is a social norm.

Homosexuality and or homosexual acts are illegal in some countries. This can make a discussion on sexual diversity challenging to address in educational sessions. Educators need to explain the laws and discuss fairness, tolerance and solidarity with your learners. Discuss with your learners how laws on sexuality vary in countries around the world and are often based on religious values/norms.

Parents and sexual diversity
"Coming out", disclosing to people around you your sexual orientation or gender identity, is one of the dilemmas that young people face and will want to discuss with you. Research findings suggest that for openly LGBTIQ young people, having a strong relationship with their parents is good for their mental health an self-esteem, and may prevent them from having suicidal feelings, from substance use, and unsafe sex. In some cases, sharing their identity with their parents made the relationship of LGBTIQ young people stronger and more loving with their parents than before. Despite all of these benefits, sometimes it might not be a good idea for gay or lesbian (or bisexual or transgender) young people to come out to their parents. Young LGBTIQ cannot count on acceptance and unconditional love from their family. Sometimes, the family may represent a risk factor (Ryan et al., 2015)

CSE AND DISABILITY

There is a strong myth that people with disabilities and girls and women with disabilities, in particular, do not have not sexual needs. It is important to note that regardless of disability or the type of disability, human beings are sexual beings, and children and adolescents living with disabilities have the equal right to information, knowledge and education on their sexuality as other children and adolescents. At the same time, persons with disabilities face significant physical, institutional, communicational and attitudinal barriers in access to SRH rights and services. With limited access to inclusive SRHR education, they are often also fewer tools to protect themselves against abuse, pregnancy and disease, or how to seek help when faced with these. (Plan International, 2017a). Discrimination is often so widespread that stigma may be internalised by girls and young women themselves. This, combined with possible negative experience at health services, can lead them to feel ashamed of their bodies, to accept ill-treatment from others or feeling too scared to ask information about SRH and related services.

HOW DOES IT WORK IN PRACTICE?

Whatever the subject, there are always new ways to better integrate diversity through case studies, media stories, historical figures and events, texts from literature and other examples.

The issue of sexual diversity can be taught as integrated or separately:

- **Integrated** means that all sessions of the CSE programme are inclusive where applicable. For example, when talking about biological changes of the body in puberty, an explanation and discussion on intersex and transgender can be included. Alternatively, when discussing falling in love, mention that people fall in love with a friend of the opposite sex and others with a friend of the same sex. In this case, the sensitive words of gay, lesbian or homosexual might be avoided but your lessons could still address more than only heteronormative situations. The word "partner" can replace the terms "boyfriend" or "girlfriend" throughout lessons, making partner an inclusive term. As soon as inclusion is applicable, sexual and gender diversity can be addressed and discussed, integrated into all CSE lessons.

- **Separately** means that a distinct time for addressing and discussing sexual and gender diversity is planned. The best way to do that is when learners and the educator are ready to talk about it. This might be after a lesson on sexuality and love, gender or human rights. In this case, the focus will be more directly on "a different group", which might also lead to stigmatisation.

An effective way to introduce these topics and to explain sexual identity, sexual orientation, sex, etc., is by using interactive exercises that help break down different concepts. Plan International has several resources for this, including:

- "Adolescents in all their Diversity" which includes pre-and post-workshop online components as well as detailed activities to run face-to-face.
- Champions of Change module: "We are Diverse!" which focuses on individual knowledge, attitudes, practices and skills concerning sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC).

Creating an enabling and safe environment
The organisation/school needs to commit to creating a safe and inclusive environment, including for LGBTIQ students. Staff leadership is crucial. You can form a staff working group team to work on the development and implementation of becoming a safe space for LGBTIQ people. You could also create a special role for a staff member to support this (UNESCO, 2012) (Standards 2 and 6)

> Social justice for all, including LGBTIQ, may be applied and implemented differently in various national legal, political and cultural contexts, but the ultimate aim in CSE should always be to advance inclusivity towards sexual and gender diversity, addressing the needs and rights of all young people.

CSE and sexual diversity in a multicultural society
Learners need to be supported to see themselves as part of a heterogeneous society

and CSE should focus on fair and equitable citizenship. It is not just about tolerance, but also about actively seeking to understand each other across lines of difference. Respect for differences and a conciliatory approach with open dialogues are the best way forward when sexuality educators address sensitive issues (Campbell, 2018).

> **The "I" message**
> During sessions you need to avoid making statements or recommendations on what learners should do or think – This is not the role of sexuality educators. If learners start using judgmental/value-laden statements, sexuality educators could encourage the use of the "I" message. These apply only to the person talking and are fair towards the others. That's how a judgmental statement like, "Girls should never go out late at night," becomes "I wouldn't like a girl to go out late at night, because I feel ...". This is a great communication tool for sexuality educators to help learners realise that they all have different perceptions of the same experience and can react differently.

Supporting materials: [Programming Guidance on Strengthening Our Work on SOGIESC,](#) [Adolescents in All their Diversity module on SOGIESC,](#) [Champions of Change Module: We are Diverse!](#)

✓ TIPS

In general:
Be sure that when you set an agreement with learners on working together for your CSE sessions, it includes issues of diversity and equality, for example:

• Respect and value uniqueness and individual differences;
• See everyone as equal to others in worth and dignity;
• Racist, sexist, homo-and transphobic (etc.) outings and bullying are not tolerated.

Speak in a familiar and non-judgmental language. Avoid "them and us". Make it about people and love, instead of only about sex. Try to give emotional, compelling examples of inequalities that people from vulnerable and stigmatised groups face.

Sexual diversity:
• Ensure that you address the topic of sexual diversity in an acceptable way (e.g. as a form of romantic love) or find role models that can be helpful).

• Explain and discuss all the abbreviations in LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, trans*, intersex, queer/questioning) as well as the differences in needs of each subgroup.

• Have a discussion on the shared beliefs, hopes and values of people in general to share the common ground we have. Most people believe that LGBTIQ people are different from ordinary (i.e. heterosexual)

people. Explain that LGBTIQ people also have ordinary lives: they work, pay taxes, have families, have friends, do domestic chores. They also want to earn a living, feel safe in the community and take care of their loved ones.

• For many young people, discussions on LGBTIQ can feel uncomfortable. These feelings are real. Do not deny them and never say: "You should not feel this way" or "Your values are traditional". Instead, say: "I understand that it is hard to talk about it, but we can agree that all young people need access to information and healthcare services". This can create trust between the educator and the learners.

• Do not indirectly agree with anti-LGBTIQ attitudes. Show an understanding that it is difficult to talk about. Sexuality educators can acknowledge the discomfort in talking about sexual diversity, but not with negative attitudes. Never refer to LGBTIQ people as "those people" or "you people".

• To tackle homophobic and transphobic bullying, you need to challenge learners' use of homophobic language in the same way that you would challenge racial slurs and bullying in general. Identify its use specifically as homophobia. Structure a classroom discussion on homophobic language.

• Avoid theological discussions on LGBTIQ people. Rather than quoting or arguing over different interpretations of religious texts, discuss shared values and beliefs. Invite people from an LGBTIQ NGO/network, or a human rights NGO, who are willing to talk about sexual orientation and gender diversity. Testimonies of LGBTIQ people

can help acceptance; they can give insight into the lives and realities of being LGBTIQ, which can increase empathy among young people.

- Be careful not to encourage young LGBTIQ learners to stand up for themselves in a highly homophobic community, including where homosexual acts are forbidden by law. This could be harmful.

Disability:
- Promote critical discussion around the reality that people are disabled due to the barriers they face in participating in society, not because of the impairment in itself.

- Challenge stigma, discrimination and inconscious bias related to disabilities.

- Be aware of the diversity of disabilities and tailor programming accordingly. A young person may also have multiple disabilities, and curricula may need adaptation on a case-by-case basis.

- Educators will need special training to understand disabilities, as well as how to use appropriate methods.

- Both content and delivery may need to adapted according to learners' needs and preferences.

- Where teaching a group of mixed abilities, do not single out learners with disabilities

Try to avoid a tokenistic approach; many people look at one single person with a disability and automatically assume that they represent the whole group. A (young) person with a disability should be seen, first and foremost, as an individual, not as being defined by their disability.

Supporting materials: Plan International's Programme Guidance on Strengthening Support to Girls, Boys and Youth with Disabilities (version 1, 2017).
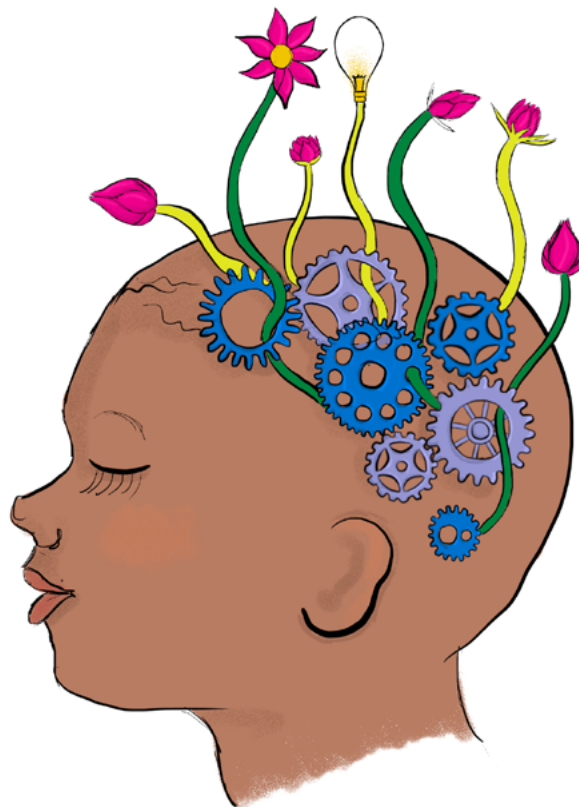
CSE curricula are age and developmentally appropriate, and respond to children, adolescents and young people's evolving capacities and needs.

INTRODUCTION

Plan International has developed guidelines for CSE, dividing the content for the chronological ages of learners. Plan International believes that CSE should support children, adolescents, and young people to develop their capacity to make informed and autonomous decisions about their sexuality and sexual health. Plan International recognises the importance of addressing the evolving capacity of learners as this refers to the way that each young person gradually develops their ability to take full responsibility for their actions and decisions.

This happens at a different pace for each individual and therefore the content of the programme should be age-and development-appropriate. Children of different ages can be at different developmental stages physically, emotionally, psychologically and cognitively. This also includes children who have disabilities, children who have suffered abuse or trauma, and other differences. This standard highlights important issues for CSE educators and programmers to find the balance to enable learners to exercise autonomy while recognising that children need support at different levels of their sexual development process and that they do not all develop at the same pace.
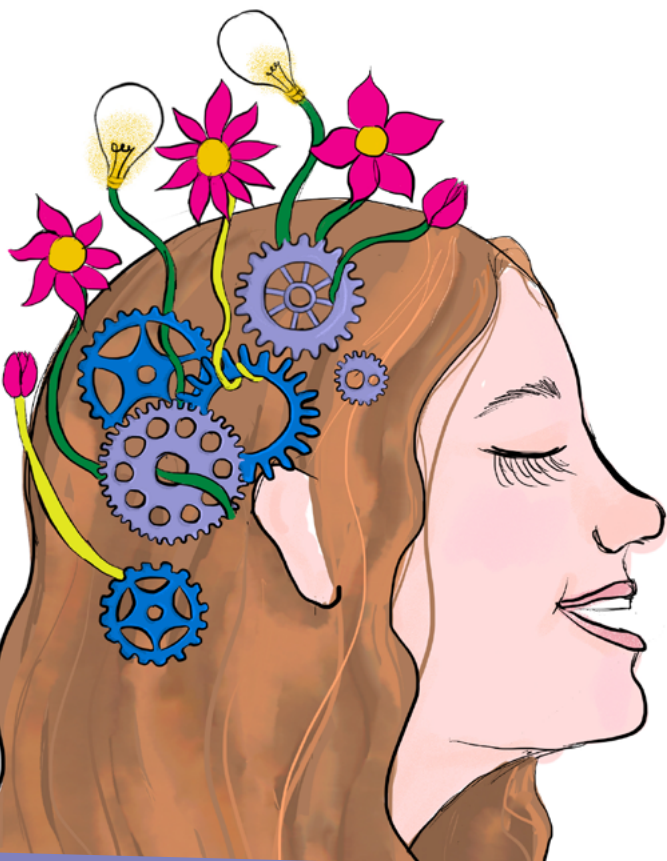
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR CSE?

Defining childhood and youth
To ensure CSE is age-and development-appropriate is complex. Although the experience of being young is universal, it takes many forms–determined by cultural, political, economic and personal factors. Some qualities often associated with childhood are "physical and emotional immaturity and vulnerability in comparison to adults, causing lack of autonomy and social dependence" (Evans, 2010). Internationally recognised definitions refer to chronological age in marking the boundary between childhood and adulthood, which is often set at 18 years. In industrialised countries, births are recorded, and the birth date is an important aspect of people's personal and legal identity. However, this is not the case in all societies, and in many locations, social experience such as migration or early marriage, and physical markers including height, facial hair, or the start of menstruation, maybe more important than age in signifying adult status.

Psychology and neuroscience add to our knowledge about children's development of physical and mental competencies including motor coordination skills, language acquisition, abstract reasoning abilities, and moral behaviour. Other studies of changes in experiences of childhood overtime set contemporary ideas in historical context, and demonstrate how political, economic and social transformations affect this.

The evolving capacity of children, adolescents, and young people
Evolving capacity is about individual development and autonomy; it refers to the way that each child or adolescent gradually develops the ability to take full responsibility for their actions and decisions. This happens at a different pace for each individual. At any given age, some adolescents or children will be more mature and experienced than others; context and personal circumstances will certainly influence each individual's development. As an educator, you need to be aware of these differences. For certain exercises, you could split up your group in subgroups according to their maturity. It also means the content of a CSE programme should involve a gradual and dynamic process of finding a balance between protecting young people while promoting and respecting their autonomy (Lansdown, 2005). CSE educators and programmers must ensure that the way they deliver CSE responds to the particular evolving capacities of children, adolescents, and young people at a given point in time in their development.

Individual children within a given society can and do vary significantly in their capacities to make informed or wise judgments at a particular age, making it difficult to introduce

a generalised policy in this field (Evans, 2010). These differences are shaped by socio-cultural, economic and political circumstances, including whether young people are growing up in independence-or interdependence-oriented societies. This affects the process of children's learning and development, and how much personal autonomy they exercise over their choices regarding their sexuality. This should be considered in CSE programmes.

> Age of consent: Plan International supports laws that recognise children, adolescents and young people as rights-holders with evolving capacities and the maturity to make decisions about their own health, including their sexual and reproductive health and rights. Laws governing the age of sexual consent should be determined separately to that of the age of marriage or the age to access sexual and reproductive health services, to ensure that adolescents who are engaging in consensual sex are not stigmatised and criminalised.
>
> For example, some 15-year-olds may be capable of making informed choices about getting involved in a sexual relationship with someone of their own or similar age. They may well be capable of understanding the risks involved, taking the necessary precautions and making informed judgments about the nature of the relationship they are embarking on. However, others of similar age will not be ready for such encounters. The situation is potentially different when the relationship is with an older sexual partner who is more experienced, and more capable of manipulating or bullying the child into making decisions or giving consent. So, in practice, much of the vulnerability of children derives not from their lack of capacity, but rather, from their lack of power and status with which to exercise their rights and challenge abuses.

What is age and developmentally responsive CSE?
Age and developmentally responsive CSE means using topics and language based on

the needs of children in different stages of development. It doesn't mean that some topics are more, and other topics are less, appropriate for a certain age. In principle, every topic could be appropriate as long as the specific child is showing interest or has a question about the topic. In case of questions, the child always has a right to receive an answer. However, the way this answer is formulated (and becomes age and developmentally appropriate) depends on the social, emotional and cognitive developmental stage of the child. Some parents can be worried about this issue, fearing that their child will learn things about sex and sexuality, which they are not ready for. (Standard 12 for more information how to address this).

Often in CSE programmes, sexual behaviour is only described as sexual intercourse and risky behaviour. However, sexuality means so much more, especially for children, adolescents, and

young people. If the wide spectrum of sexual feelings and experiences from a young age are ignored, this means that not all aspects of sexuality and sexual health will be addressed.

HOW DOES IT WORK IN PRACTICE?

Regarding this standard, CSE programmes should gradually support children, adolescents, and young people to increase their knowledge, to help them to explore their values and norms, to improve their self-esteem, their respect for others, to think critically about norms in their society around gender and sexuality, and to make autonomous decisions regarding sex, sexuality and relationships. The following elements will enhance this gradual approach:

a) Start young
As sexual development starts already from birth, it is important to start CSE at a young age. CSE can help children to explore their sexual feelings and can support them in their sexual development. Use of sexual terminology can be adjusted to their intellectual and emotional understanding.

For example, younger children already start to develop bodily self-esteem. Every part of the body is interesting. Parents/educators can let the child know that all of the body is good: ears, genitals, everything. They can help children to explore and conquer new surroundings with confidence.

It is also important that specific contents information, skills and attitudes are provided and are introduced before the child reaches the corresponding stage of development, to prepare them for the changes which are about to take place (e.g. a girl should know about menstruation before she experiences it for the

first time). Finally, already from a young age, children can be the victims of sexual abuse. CSE can help them to recognise this and discuss this with relevant people.

b) Use language that is understandable by the age group
Use the terminology and images that is understandable for the developmental stage of the child. This means that other words should be used for a four-year-old compared to a 14-year old child in explaining the same topic. For example, when explaining about the reproduction process, it is usually enough to tell the four-year-old that when a sperm from the man meets the egg from the woman, a baby can grow out of this. At the age of four, children are typically not interested in more details. But at the age of 14, the child should know the detailed process of sperm coming from the penis after ejaculation in the vagina of the woman and meeting an egg in the uterus of a woman, when both have unprotected (penis in vagina) sexual intercourse with each other, and at a certain moment during the menstrual cycle of the woman.

c) Use their needs as a foundation for your CSE topics and content
The Plan International CSE Topics overview can be used as a guide to select the age and developmentally appropriate topics for a specific age. But when children have

questions beyond the scope of the topic table, explanations should be formulated in such a way that it will be understandable for children at that age. Asking questions means that a child shows interest in the specific topic and expresses a need to know more. For upper primary school and middle school learners (or learners of comparable ages in an out-of-school setting), an effective way of developing your CSE lessons is to ask and inquire about the needs and specific interests of the learners first. By integrating these specific learners' needs into your lessons, the lessons will become more interesting for your students.

For example, the subject of methods of transmission of STIs/HIV should be an appropriate topic according to the Plan International's CSE Topics Overview for learners aged 9–12 years and older. This implies that this topic initially will not be discussed with children younger than nine years old. Still some children of a younger age, for whatever reason related to their environment, might have a question about STIs/HIV. These children have the right to receive an answer to their question. The educator should formulate their answer in such a way that it is still understandable for the younger child. This means the answer could be formulated to be short and simple, deleting the details appropriate for older children (Child of four years old: "why is that person HIV sick?" Educator: "That person has HIV which is an illness people can get in different ways. Some people get it when born from parents who already have HIV. Others can become ill when having sexual intercourse with someone who is already ill."

d) Involve young people

Involving young people in the design, delivery and evaluation of sexuality education programmes is essential to establish whether the programme is supporting the development of young people's capacity. Research suggests that young people often feel excluded from societal decision-making processes and perceive efforts to increase their involvement in the design and delivery of services as tokenistic (EU Youth Partnership).

At the very minimum, all young people are entitled to have their opinion heard and to be informed about decisions that are made on their behalf, regardless of their age or individual development. If a young person of any age expresses an opinion about their life or health, it should be taken into consideration. (See Standard 11.)

Providing genuine opportunities for young people to participate in programming will not only help to produce programmes and resources that relate to young people's "real-life situations" but will also support young people's participation in decision-making processes.

e) Address the sexuality of young people with special needs

Children with physical, intellectual, sensory and psychosocial disabilities are often not seen as sexual beings and do not receive any information on sexuality and relationships. Although their sexual development may be hindered, both by functional limitations and by intentional or unintentional societal barriers, children, adolescents, and young people with disabilities have the same rights to CSE (UN, 2006). CSE educators and programmers should be aware of the needs of children, adolescents, and young people with disabilities. Special CSE programmes should address this unmet need and implement strategies that promote the physical, emotional, social and psychosexual independence of children, adolescents and young adults with disabilities.

✓ TIPS

- Use materials and methods that are tailored to specific age and development stages across childhood and adolescence.

- Ensure that CSE educators have the expertise, training and support for managing the balance between protecting young people from unwanted consequences of sexual relationships, while gradually optimising their capacity for autonomy and asserting their right to decide.

- Learn more about the family, friends and environment in which the learners live. This is important because the maturity of young people depends, to a large extent, on the context in which they live (Standard 1). Make sure privacy and confidentiality are guaranteed and make sure that learners know this.

- CSE is best delivered in age or developmentally similar groups, tailored to the specific needs of the group e.g. disability, gender.

- Adults–teachers, parents/caregivers, community/religious leaders–should be informed about the importance of CSE that begins from birth and continues throughout childhood.

DELIVERY

CSE programmes are delivered in a safe learning environment.

INTRODUCTION

Learners need to feel safe to learn. CSE educators need to feel safe to be able to teach and address the sensitive issues of sexuality. It is important to create an atmosphere where learners and educators feel safe to give input, ask and answer questions – especially when using interactive teaching approaches (Standard 9), such as working in small groups and cooperative learning, and addressing sensitive topics.

WHAT IS A SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR DELIVERING CSE?

A safe environment refers to the physical, social, psychological and emotional aspects of the space where CSE is delivered. It is about creating a space that is well organised, where there is the possibility for group work and where learners can see each other face-to-face. There should be an atmosphere that is characterised by mutual respect and all have agreed not to disclose any sensitive or personal issue shared in the classroom by a learner or educator.

A safe learning environment is part of a safe school. The safety should go beyond the classroom. It should be safe for learners everywhere in the school and outside, where they meet each other. Learners should have their own safe spaces inside and outside the classroom.

Plan International safeguarding policy is for staff, beneficiaries and partners. The policy includes a comprehensive code of conduct and guidelines on how to act when something negative happens.

Supporting Guidance
Plan International Safeguarding Children and Young People Global Policy (2019)

Physical aspects
First, the room where you work with learners needs to be clean, orderly and inviting. The space should be accessible for all young people including young people with disabilities. The space should encourage learners to contribute – e.g. by having posters on the wall regarding SRHR issues or relevant flip charts of earlier lessons. A room that is not clean, where papers are lying on the floor, or things are falling out of desks, is distracting and not motivating. The room needs to have all the resources required – books, folders, materials and tested audio-visual or electronic equipment – within easy reach, so that you never have to stop the CSE session. The physical space of the classroom needs to be set up for easy movement and interaction – so learners can easily pull their desks together to do small group work, and you can walk around. Your movement around the classroom helps make your teaching more engaging. It is also important to think about a clean and well-organised environment beyond the room where CSE is delivered, especially in a school setting.

Social aspects
One of the essential characteristics of learner-centred/participatory teaching is being able to create a space for learners where they feel comfortable and free to express themselves. Sexuality educators need to know how to create a culture and environment to foster the learners' way of being. It has to promote a feeling of safety, so they can share and learn. The environment needs to encourage integrity, open communication, empathy and understanding, enabling learners to learn and share.

Psychological and emotional aspects
To discuss sexuality and relationships can be emotionally challenging for individual learners. Assure your learners that you, as their educator, will keep all discussions confidential. In this way, you serve as a role model for respecting others' privacy. Learners must also respect your privacy and you should not share personal sexual experiences. Discussing sensitive issues can help young people to open up about personal problems, e.g. unwanted pregnancy, gender-based violence, with a trusted person or another professional expert (medical or other).

Bullying and homophobia

As an educator, you can encounter bullying or discriminatory behaviour among learners. It is important to have zero tolerance of this and to challenge of all forms of offensive or discriminatory language during sessions (e.g. homophobic and transphobic comments, sexist and sexual language, racist and faith-targeted comments, disablist words).

KNOW WHEN AND HOW TO REFER

When a learner approaches you with a problem, addressing it in a non-judgmental way is crucial for helping them to open up. Believe them, take them seriously, praise them for looking for help, and explain that sometimes it takes small steps to solve a problem.

Here are some suggestions on how a sexuality educator can help a learner individually:

- When a learner comes to you with a personal question or problem, they need to be aware that your job is teaching and not counselling. You can, as a sexuality educator, help with a personal issue to some extent, but be aware of when a problem goes beyond your expertise or capabilities.

- Let the learner know your talk together is confidential. Emphasise that confidential means in this case that others might need to be involved, but that involvement will never be without the learner's consent or behind the learner's back.

- If in the conversation with the learner, you have reached your professional limits, you need to refer the learner to a health professional or counsellor and in some cases a legal organisation. For this, the organisation or school needs to have a regularly updated referral list.

- All schools/organisations where you are providing CSE should have an active child protection/anti-bullying policy, which staff and volunteers are trained on and which is communicated to all partners and learners, including the establishment in which you are working. This is especially important when talking about sensitive issues surrounding sexuality, as you need to be clear on the laws and policies regarding the age of consent and regarding young people's disclosures about sexual activity or abuse.

- You or the school/organisation should get in contact with professionals whom you can refer to, before any case arises. You need to know how professionals and referral systems work in practice, and having a personal contact, makes you more secure and confident in supporting learners and referring them to these professionals and services.

HOW DOES IT WORK IN PRACTICE?

EDUCATOR - LEARNER INTERACTION	LEARNER - LEARNER INTERACTION
You can enable a safe atmosphere by your own attitude and behaviour: you can show how the environment for teaching CSE relies on democracy	Agree with your learners how you will work together. All learners should feel involved, listened to, comfortable and safe from ridicule, especially when they take risks with sharing new ideas
You need to consider the diversity among learners and try to include everyone in discussions to obtain a diverse input. It allows learners to enter conversations and explore each other's ideas as equals	Encourage participation, particularly among those who feel different, alone or intimidated
Many educators are taught to treat everyone identically. Sometimes they see differences but treat them as if they are insignificant. These educators might assume that the values and behaviours of the dominant culture are universally applicable and equally beneficial to all. That assumption ignores many learners' diverse backgrounds, what they value and how they learn –and it can leave those learners feeling invisible	Ask learners to respect other learners' privacy and remind them not to disclose information outside the classroom that is private. Consider how some learners might intimidate or even abuse others after leaving a classroom where sensitive topics have been discussed and think about how to act proactively. e.g., by having consensus of how to work together
Being open doesn't mean that educators should share their own (sexual) experiences	Do not tolerate any violation, disrespect or discrimination and act immediately on bullying, sexism, racism or homo- and transphobic comments
Nobody should be pushed to share; giving input is a right and so is keeping silent	Finally, encourage all learners to share their thoughts. Praise them for their participation. Do not judge their ideas
Be aware of your own gender bias and give everyone equal space. Consider same-sex groups for part of the sessions, for example, on GBV, or ask girls and boys to prepare questions for each other, and ensure diversity in who is presenting group work	Ask for their feedback about the sessions
When discussing sensitive issues, allow the use of local language when relevant, but ensure proper translation, so everybody stays involved	

Teachers and educators should make a **risk assessment**, which includes identifying issues that may cause harm; have an insight on who may be harmed and how, know when to take action, and always make a record of their findings.

If necessary, all these principles can be listed in **a set of ground rules**, class principles, a code of conduct or "group safety wishes", which can be developed together with the learners. When these come mainly from the learners, they will consider them as their own. In this way, teachers and educators should be role models and follow the same rules and principle the learners.

Teachers and educators should be aware of the **intergenerational power dynamics** between them and the learners. In many societies, adults expect respect from the younger

generation. Intergenerational relationships should be characterised by reciprocity. Younger generations support older people, while adults assist younger people. Trust between young people and adults is essential for CSE. Adults may find it difficult to give young people autonomy as part of their evolving capacities to make their own decisions. It is essential that each teacher educator treats all learners with equal respect and provide equal opportunities. If adults lack trust in young people's abilities, their visions and their willingness to participate, it will harm effective CSE.

Educators and teachers should also feel safe and be protected from any form of harm. Teaching sensitive issues can expose teachers educators to negative responses, threats, untrue accusations, unfair treatment by learners, learners' parents, the community and others. School management needs to ensure that there are policies and regulations in place that protect its staff.

✓ **TIPS**

- At the start of the session(s), agree with all learners on the ground rules of working together. Write them on a board or flipchart and remind learners during the session(s), as needed.

- Use language you and learners feel comfortable with. For example, ask learners what words they know for penis, vagina, intercourse, gay and lesbian and agree which words to use. It is important to question and discuss words that are denigrating or discriminating.

- Encourage participation, particularly among those who feel alone or intimidated.

- Assure learners that their privacy is respected. In this way, you serve as a role model for respecting others' privacy.

- Ask the same of learners; remind them not to disclose information exchanged during CSE activities, outside the classroom. Consider how some learners might intimidate or even abuse others after leaving a session in which sensitive topics have been discussed and what can be done to prevent this. Make sure that learners understand that they have the right not to participate or share if doing so makes them feel at risk.

- Be aware that learners won't have the same level of attention all the time; respond to their energy level, stop for a break or an energizer.

- Always answer questions with honesty and care, and admit if you don't know something. You don't need to be an expert on every single topic. Refer to other experts if you can't answer the question. Assure your learners that you will address it during the next session with answers.

- Encourage learners not to be afraid to make mistakes. You need to be clear that you trust young people to be capable of making their own judgments and that most young people intend to manage their sexual health and relationship choices well, even if they make mistakes and have challenges along the way.

- During the sessions, move around and interact with learners, and create connections.

- Model kindness at every chance you get.

- Feel free to laugh with your learners and

be vulnerable. You can show that you also can feel a bit shy when discussing intimate issues.
- Invite learners to answer questions of fellow learners instead of doing it yourself.

- Use a respectful tone of voice when responding to learners' questions. Try to avoid responding with remarks that humiliate ("why do you not know that?") or that show up learners' lack of knowledge (" I am surprised you don't know this"). This will negatively affect learners' trust in you and will deter them from asking questions.

- Show that you feel comfortable with the `and session plans. Adhere to safeguarding and anti-bullying policies.

- Encourage all learners to share their feedback about the lessons.

**CSE programmes are based on quality training and continuous support to educators.**

INTRODUCTION

Well-trained sexuality educators (including teachers, community facilitators etc) are essential for delivering high-quality CSE. Without training and further support, educators will struggle to adapt and adopt the content of CSE and the way they deliver it.

WHAT IS HIGH-QUALITY TRAINING FOR CSE EDUCATORS?

The approach, content and length of training on CSE can vary greatly. In the best case, sexuality educators, especially teachers, receive quality pre-service training with follow-up in-service training, mentoring and support. Training programmes are most effective when the trainees are involved in its design and when the training itself builds on educators' knowledge, skills and confidence; a pre-assessment of knowledge, attitudes and skills might help to inform the training. For basic in-service training, a minimum of three to five days is needed to cover all the aspects of CSE. Short training programmes or workshops can be developed on specific issues or for specific groups.

Training will be most effective and sustainable when educators receive ongoing support. This will help to ensure that educators stay true to the completeness and content as well as the methodology of CSE.
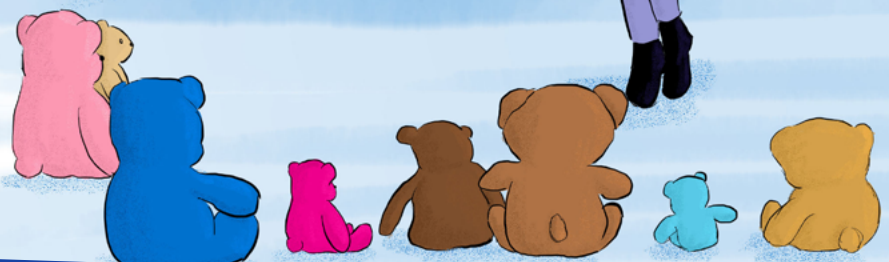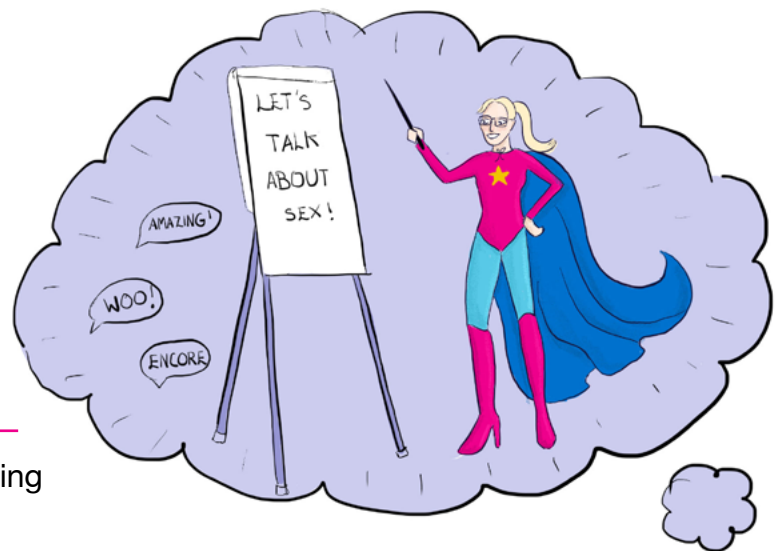
HOW DOES IT WORK IN PRACTICE?

Example of a structured approach to capacity building/training of teachers/educators:

- Awareness raising workshop
- Pre assessment
- (Ongoing) training
- Post assessment /Evaluation
- Ongoing support

Profile of a trainer

Training on CSE is a profession. Trainers need to have in-depth knowledge and understanding of the competencies of educators. However, trainers in CSE need more: knowledge of learning theories, adult learning, training techniques, group dynamics, and the latest research on the sexual and reproductive health of young people in their country and relevant global research. They also need to be open to learning new techniques. They should have evidence-informed knowledge on different topics related to human sexuality and have insight into the diversity of norms and values regarding sex, sexuality and relationships in their society. Finally, they need to be aware of their gaps and weaknesses.

When trainers work with a co-trainer, before running a course or training, they should discuss each detail and each other's roles and decide how to divide the delivery of the sessions. It is also helpful to discuss personal values and decide beforehand how to cope with differences. During the training, it is important to give each other support and not contradict what the other is saying.

Content of a training programme

Basic training should allow trainees to explore the content of CSE, their own attitudes and values, help them to recognise and address their vulnerabilities, promote self-reflection and help develop their life skills so that they can protect themselves and others. Training programmes must include a wide range of topics beyond anatomy to address areas of interest for children, adolescents, and young people (Standards 2, 6). The programme also includes the methods of delivery/teaching approaches (Standard 7), how to create a safe environment (Standard 7), and getting adequate support for the implementation of CSE (Standards 10, 14). The training sessions introduce and define CSE, and include the SRH status of young people and which SRH rights they have, all in the context of Plan International's standards. Support trainees to communicate openly about sexuality. The meaning of a rights-based and positive approach in teaching CSE may need in-depth explanation. When delivering CSE, the learner-centred approach and interactive methodologies need to be introduced and practised (Standard 9). Practical issues like preparing a lesson plan and the basics of counselling are often seen as very valuable. In addition, how to work with parents, get support from the community and refer to services are relevant topics (Standard 13).

(Supplementary resources: teaching tips)

Supporting materials: Plan International's Conversations that Matter: Dialogues in SRHR – foundational SRHR training materials

Specialised training is needed for work with special groups, such as young people who are LGBTIQ and young people living with disabilities.

Supporting materials: Adolescents in All their Diversity module on SOGIESC

Follow-up and ongoing support

To follow up, specific short workshops can be run after six to 12 months to review and discuss positive experiences and challenges related to implementing the CSE activities. It is helpful to assess the challenges beforehand.

While most sexuality educators would agree that face-to-face training is a crucial component of their learning, virtual or online support after the training saves time and costs and may give them the confidence to ask questions that they would not have felt comfortable exploring otherwise.

Using social media as a tool for further capacity-building allows sexuality educators to create a personalised learning path. Connected through digital channels, peers can experience this support and insight in minutes or hours compared to the days or weeks previously required to schedule and complete formal support and/or training.

Creating a web-based platform or a messenger app can provide a compelling place where providers of different ages and experiences can meet to advance their knowledge base and expertise. Learning and supporting each other

through a messenger app can be organised in sessions, spread over months or years. A lead sexuality educator is needed to monitor the interaction within outlined subject areas. Peers can also catch up if they are delayed or unable to be part of a session. Peers also have the opportunity to ask questions and share their ideas and thoughts with the leading peer coach and other peers. Many messenger app groups are created to remain connected socially.

Using a messenger app avoids incurring travelling, meetings, transportation and other time and financial costs. However, to successfully participate, peers must have a phone that has internet access with a messenger app, like WhatsApp.

✓ **TIPS**

Before the training programme:
- An advance questionnaire or discussion with management can assess needs and existing knowledge. A short pre-test at the start of a course can explore attitudes and skills.
- Know the context, especially with regards the SRH of young people and the current status of CSE.

During the training:
- Throughout the training and follow-up support, you should "model" the activities. This helps trainees to experience good practice on how to deliver CSE.
- It can be useful to include experienced teachers to serve as role models by sharing their experiences.
- Ensure that participants have up-to-date access to the content of the topics and relevant evidence.
- Ensure that all the training materials are available in the local language.

- Ensure value clarification is included, and ideas and opinions or values are discussed concerning relevant SRH/contextual topics.
- Allow participants to practise skills/exercises, especially on facilitating CSE.
- For each activity delivered during the training, participants need to be asked to literally to "step out" of that activity to reflect and analyse the trainer's process in facilitating that activity. This analysis helps to apply what they have observed to their teaching.

Evaluation:
- End each day with a summary and a brief evaluation. For example, using a barometer, ask what did participants like about the atmosphere in the group, the content of the training, the delivery of the training, improvements to make and any other comments.
- When participants have filled in a pre-test, ask them to fill in a post-test to see whether their attitudes/skills regarding SRH and CSE have changed.
- Prepare and share an overall evaluation form, including questions, about how they can use what they have learned in the training sessions.

SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES: STANDARD 8

Checklist for content/delivery of training programme
- Does the content of the training programme cover Plan International's standards and topics for CSE and internationally approved criteria of sexuality education?
- Does the methodology used in the programme enable participating trainees to implement CSE in their work with children, adolescents, and young people?
- Are there adequate opportunities for participants to explore and nurture positive values and attitudes towards SRH in general and of young people, and respect for human rights and gender equality?
- Is it scientifically accurate? Is content evidence-informed and based on facts and evidence related to SRHR, sexuality and behaviours?
- Is it understanding of and responsive to the changing needs and capabilities of the learners as they grow? Is it age and developmentally appropriate?
- Is it based on a human rights approach?
- Does it consider contextual/cultural norms?
- Is the issue of gender and social transformation crosscutting?
- Does it advise on teaching materials, books/films?
- Is the duration adequate?
- Does it include relevant policies regarding SRHR?
- Does it cover support after the training programme?

Example of an agenda for a CSE training programme
Day 1:
Introduction and setting the scene
• Participant introductions
• Expectation setting
• Working agreements
• Logistics and house-keeping
• Pre-test
Our context: SRHR and young people
Definition, role and evidence on CSE
• Definition
• Why do we need CSE?
• What does effective CSE look like?
Personal values vs. CSE
Topics covered in the CSE curriculum
Re-cap
Pedagogy and delivery of CSE
• Definition of a learner-centred approach
• Key elements of a learner-centred approach

Day 2:
Re-cap
Pedagogy and delivery of CSE
• Definition of a learner-centred approach
• Key elements of a learner-centred approach
• Understanding evolving capacities, experiential learning, interactive and participatory approaches
Pedagogy and delivery of CSE (cont.)
Role and competencies of sexuality educators
• What are the competencies?
• How to implement a gender transformative approach?
• Risk-based vs. positive approach
• Dos and don'ts on language
Role and competencies of sexuality educators (cont.)
Facts vs. values
• Ethics
• Enabling learners to form their own opinions

Day 3:
Re-cap
Contextualising CSE
• Messages received in the community
Laws and SRHR of young people
• Countering myths on CSE
Difficult/sensitive issues
• Comfort zones
• Sexuality and Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity / Expression (SOGIE)
• Sexual wellbeing and pleasure
• Abortion / unwanted pregnancy
• Sexuality in cyberspace
Difficult / sensitive issues (cont.)
Classroom management
• Dealing with tough situations

Day 4:
Re-cap
Practise delivering CSE + Feedback
Practise delivering CSE + Feedback
Practise delivering CSE + Feedback
Next steps and wrap-up

THINGS TO DO IN FACILITATING TRAINING:	THINGS TO AVOID IN FACILITATING TRAINING:
Organise group work • Use groups to get everyone involved and to allow more detailed discussions • Decide on the size of groups – pairs, 3s, 4s, 5s, 6-10 people • Fewer groups save reporting time, small groups increase participation • Divide participating trainees into groups using a group divider • Give a clear explanation of the group task, time and reporting method • Form new groups each time so that trainees get to work with different people **Record on the flipchart** • Write large and clearly enough for people at the back of the room to see • Write key words only and use participants' own words • Ask a co-facilitator to record so you can concentrate on the facilitation • Use the flipchart notes to stimulate further discussion and then summarise	• Too much talking, including background chatting • Too much theory and becoming too academic • Using the same methods all the time • Use of complicated language or jargon • Speaking too fast for trainees to follow • Overloading trainees with too much information • Too many lectures • Poor time management • Seeing yourself as the expert • Giving the floor to the same trainees every time • Being gender-biased • Too much mess in the training room • Solving problems and making decisions for the participants • Imposing your ideas and solutions on the participants • Criticising, condemning or making fun of people's ideas • Making people dependent on your advice
Observe and test the climate • Observe body language and ask people how they are feeling • Do they look interested, bored or sleepy? • Are they doing most of the talking to you? • Do they need a break or a wake-up exercise?	
Select appropriate activities and use a variety • Select activities appropriate to the objectives • Don't use the same methods all the time. Keep things changing! • Use different sizes and types of groups, change the meeting space (why not go outside?), and take turns as trainers – so people don't switch off • Use activities that trainees could use with other groups as well and discuss with trainees how activities could be adapted to other groups and contexts, in a culturally sensitive, age and developmentally appropriate way	

Source: Partners in Health. Training of trainers.

CSE uses participatory teaching approaches that provide opportunities to explore and discuss personal values and attitudes, and build relevant skills and the confidence to make decisions.

INTRODUCTION

Many educators feel embarrassed about discussing intimate issues with learners – they may be afraid of learners' reactions, or fear that they will encourage learners to become sexually active and encourage them to have sex. However, learners will be glad to receive information on issues they want to know about, or which confuse them. They already have much more knowledge than many may think, from the internet, social media, or through their own life circumstances.

Using participatory methods makes educators' work much easier and more enjoyable. Plan International's approach to CSE, which emphasises gender equity, sex positivity and empowerment, requires the use of teaching approaches that help to engage learners and help them to critically analyse their individual situations and social context. This helps learners to adopt a more open attitude towards equity in relationships, gender identity and sexual diversity (Standards 3, 5). It helps them to feel empowered about putting these ideas into practice. This will have a positive effect on their behaviour and sexual health outcomes.
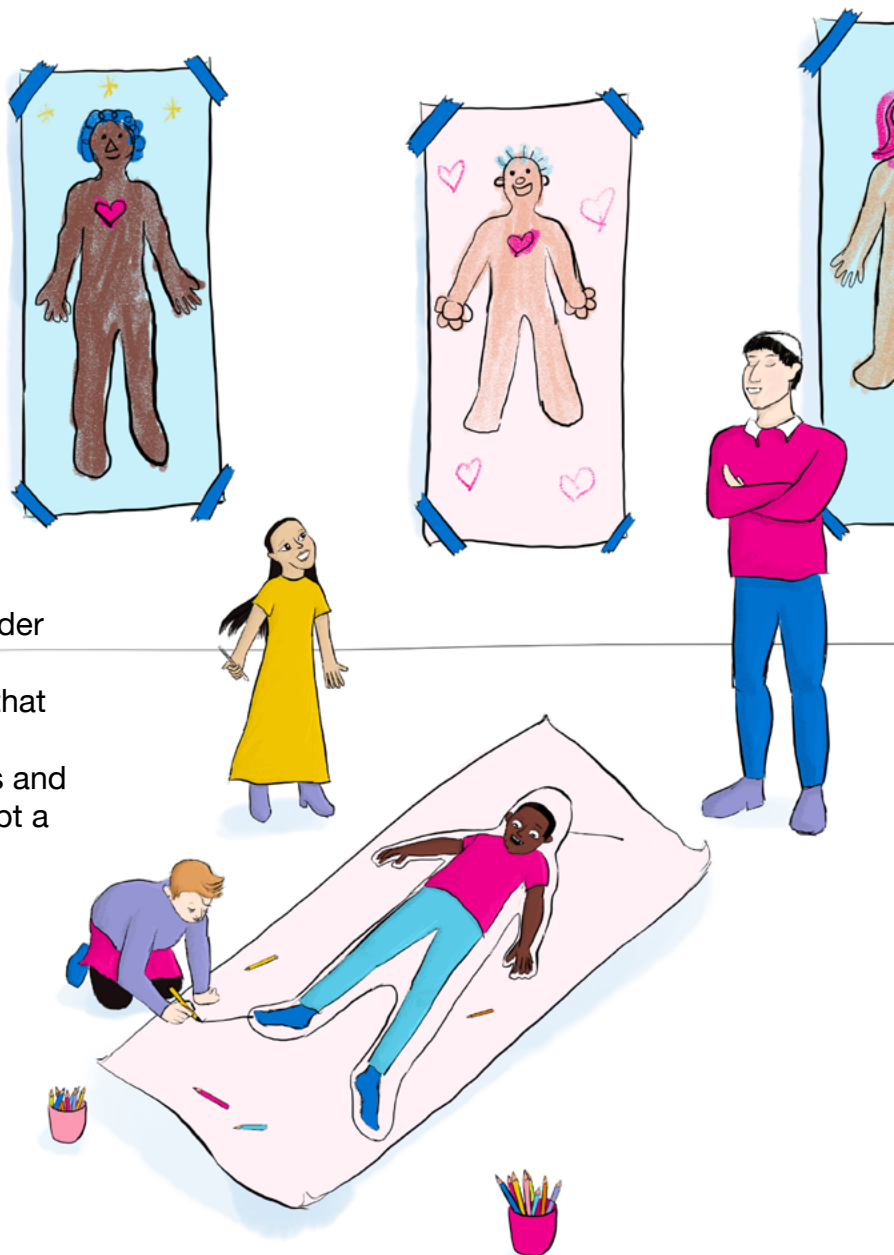
WHAT ARE PARTICIPATORY LEARNING APPROACHES?

Participatory teaching is an interactive mutual learning approach that developed in the early 1990s. It encourages learners to freely express their opinions and needs. It includes debates about changes in existing individual behaviour and social conditions. This contributes to changes in the perceptions of learners and their readiness to contemplate action. A process of analysis and dialogue helps learners to compromise with each other. It also helps to define desired changes and to motivate people to implement these.

Participatory learning in CSE requires a pedagogic shift from the traditional teacher-centred approach, where emphasis is on educators and what they teach, to a learner-centred approach, whereby emphasis is on learners and what they learn. This approach builds on existing knowledge of learners and includes interactive teaching methods.

Interactive educators encourage learners to participate in their own learning process. They praise learners, giving positive feedback, allowing trial and error and ensuring a practical application of learning. The use of real-world contexts is an excellent way to do this. Research suggests that "when educators create meaningful learning activities that focus on situations, problems and contexts that learners will encounter in their life, cooperation and communication grow, and critical thinking skills and academic performance improve" (Scott, 2015).

In this approach, the educator is no longer the only authority. Instead they enable learners to ask critical questions, and to be active community members.

Critical aspects of participatory teaching

- More equal relationships between educators and learners: From experience and research, we know that learners learn best when educators allow them to interact freely with them and with each other. This implies a more equal relationship between educator and learners.

- Collaboration: Groups of learners work together to discuss issues and problems, solve problems, evaluate and settle disputes.

- Working with problems: Learners can design and solve more problems, and discover various aspects of a situation.

- Exploring and analysing values and norms: Using value clarification methods, educators help learners to "clarify" their values by having them reflect on moral dilemmas and think through the consequences of the options open to them, choosing the action that represents their deepest values. Educators should not impose their values on learners as this denies the individuality and autonomy of learners.

- Teaching skills to help learners translate content into their own context and practice: The content is personalised, and learners are helped to internalise and transfer lessons learned into their own daily practices and their community environment.

Not all teachers may feel comfortable to use a participatory pedagogical approach. They may be more used to the traditional way of frontal teaching, whereby they feel they have more control over the content and the learners. They may also feel that using different methods will add to their work stress. Successful application of classical methods, combined with participatory methods, can be very helpful to address continuity of learning in all age groups. The combination with group interactive methods is an effective way to stimulate learning and personal development from early ages. It will help the teachers to create learning situations and increase the willingness of learners to cooperate, to listen, and to learn.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF USING PARTICIPATORY LEARNING APPROACHES?

BENEFITS		CHALLENGES	
For educators	**For learners**	**For educators**	**For learners**
Improved relationship with learners	You learn from each other	Takes time and preparation	You may feel prompted to share personal issues you might later regret
You can measure progress during the group process	You are involved in the content of lessons	You need to ensure you understand the needs of your learners	You cannot be a passive recipient of the lessons
Breaks routine of teaching and stimulates creativity	You feel that your input is taken seriously and that you are listened to	You need to be able to organise your lessons well	You need to be able trust your educator
By meeting the needs and interests of learners, you stimulate learning	You learn from each other	You will have less control over what is happening during the lessons	You are co-responsible for the progress of the lessons and the atmosphere in the room
You can monitor progress of learning during the sessions		How to involve less active learners, and prevent loud voices from dominating?	If you are shy, other learners could intimidate or dominate the group discussions

HOW DOES IT WORK IN PRACTICE?

Creating a safe environment
First, you need to create a safe atmosphere, not only by explaining the need to feel safe and comfortable when discussing topics related to sexuality, but also by your attitude and your behaviour as an educator (Standard 7).

Matching content with methods
When you use a participatory learning approach you need to select your methods carefully. Knowledge-based learning is complemented with practical skills, and the opportunity to reflect on values and attitudes. For example, role play will not be the best way to convey evidence-based knowledge, while a lecture cannot effectively improve skills.

Examples of participatory methods include small-group work, paired and whole-class interactive work, extended dialogue with learners, questioning, teacher modelling and demonstration, reciprocal teaching and cooperative learning. They also include value statements, case studies, small discussion groups or pairs, role-playing, integrating the use of the internet into assignments, anonymous question boxes, lecture and information sessions, and group reflection.

Choosing an interactive method/exercise depends on:
- The objective of the learning
- The level of knowledge/experience of the learners
- The "climate" in the group: can learners collaborate and/or listen to each other?
- Can learners relate to the exercise: does it reflect their personal situation, and can they apply the outcomes in their personal life?

Behaviours for educators:
- Involve learners (age- and development-appropriate) in CSE design, implementation and / or evaluation.
- Encourage, but don't force, participation of all learners.
- Be aware that learners won't have the same level of attention all the time; respond to their energy level, stop for a break or an energizer when needed.
- Always answer questions with honesty and care, and admit if you don't know something. You don't need to be an expert on every single topic. Refer to other experts if you can't answer the question.
- Focus on using experiences and examples which are familiar to the children, adolescents, and young people in the context they live in. Ask learners to relate the content to their own lives and world.
- Encourage learners not to be afraid to make mistakes. The educator needs to be clear that they trust young people as capable of making their judgements and that most young people intend to manage their sexual health and relationship choices well, even if they make mistakes and have challenges along the way.

Guidance for using an interactive exercise
You must try out the exercise for yourself and believe in it. If you are not convinced that it works, it affects the learners.

a) To instruct an exercise:
You need to give clear instructions on the procedure and the expected outcomes of the exercise. This avoids the learners asking questions to clarify in the course of the exercise.

b) During the exercise:

You need to ask inviting questions that help the learners to think – but not to intimidate them. When learners do not agree with each other, you need to ask extra questions about why learners made certain choices. You can ask why a learner has a certain opinion. It can be more helpful if the sexuality educator asks these types of question: "can you tell more about what you mean?": "can you give an example?"; "I am wondering how you figured that out; can you help me?". This way the learners learn that to understand a problem, or when a learner has a certain opinion, they need to dig deeper and not just accept an initial superficial answer. Avoid blaming; blaming learners ends up only making them feel bad. Instead, ask the question: "What could have helped the person to use contraceptives?" or "What could be improved to help young people to use contraceptives?".

c) To follow up an exercise:

Just as essential as what happens during the exercise is what happens afterwards. Sexuality educators need to be ready to lead discussion on the outcomes and to pay attention to common ideas/answers among the learners (Wasserman, 2017).

Example condom use:

- Demonstration: show how to use a condom- little interaction
- Discuss personal attitudes/values towards condom use by group discussions (e.g. when a girl has a condom in her bag, she is asking for it) - interactive
- Practice skills: in communication and condom use (e.g. role play, practising rolling of condom on each other's fingers) - interactive
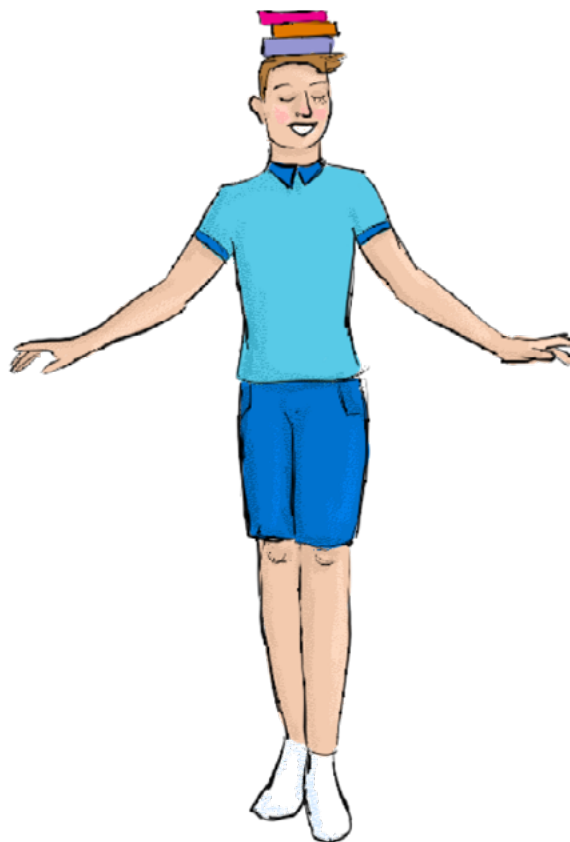
Interactive modern technologies

The rapid increase in access to and use of digital technologies has led to an explosion of interest in the potential of mobile health or 'mHealth' to open up opportunities for learning and health information. Given the dynamic characters of young people, care should be given how they use digital technologies in CSE. So, while mHealth approaches offer a cost-effective and direct way to deliver valuable SRH information, it is vital to consider everyday mobile phone practices, which in some contexts see phones shared or owned for limited times, meaning that delivering sensitive information via this route may be inappropriate. Access is often transient, and diverse ownership, borrowership and sharing practices are flourishing. Sometimes, girls' and young women's access to mobile technology is mediated by (often male) gatekeepers, making it challenging for them to access SRH information. Girls might be reluctant to access such services for fear of being perceived as being sexually active. There is a significant challenge in overcoming the socio-cultural barriers that prevent girls from gaining unsupervised access to technology.(UNESCO 2020)

Digital sexuality education could become a platform for critical learning about relationships, sex, rights, responsibilities, ethics and justice. Young people could be asked what they think about sexual and bodily expression in a broad sense, and then guided to explore how risk and harm emerge from a cultural context characterised by stereotypes and inequalities. There could be a possibility here for inter-generational co-learning in which adults are positioned less as experts. Instead, the emphasis is on a collaborative approach between adults and young people, in which they come together to re-think social issues and develop solutions. It could be a less formal form of CSE and more of a process focused on information, understanding, and more youth focussed. (Setty 2019)

✓ TIPS

- Encourage learners to participate in their own learning process by praising them for their input, by giving continuously positive feedback and by allowing trial and error.

- Ensure a practical application of learning – for example, learners can learn to communicate and negotiate safer sex by acting or role-play, with imaginary partners.

- Practise being neutral, objective and non-judgmental; be aware of your own norms and values by clarifying and separating personal values and attitudes from professional roles and responsibilities.

- Enable learners to develop critical thinking by asking them to solve real-life problems and personal dilemmas by themselves or in small groups.

- Help learners to understand themselves and think for themselves – for example, write a group play or poem on certain topics such as unwanted pregnancy, sexual diversity etc.

- Involve learners as much as possible and prevent them focusing attention only on you as educator. Sitting in a circle, without tables can help.

- Give attention to everything that you see directly and indirectly – see, listen and feel what happens.

| OBJECTIVES	LESS EFFECTIVE METHODS	MOST EFFECTIVE METHODS	EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES
Increase knowledge	One-way transfer of information from the educator to the learners	Active processing of information, tailored to the target group by using interactive exercise evoking discussions and exchange with learners Educators correct misconceptions among learners through discussion and debate with learners	Discussions, questions and answers (Q&As) Educators provide practical and evidence-based information about personal needs and risks, related to the topic. ALWAYS make sure learners feel they can do something to avoid risks, by providing them with skills, increasing their confidence and empowering them Checklists and personal assessments, providing scenarios (modelling story), video or written stories of people's experiences Self-study and reflection on evidence-based information
Develop appropriate attitudes	Telling young people how they should think	Use convincing and persuasive arguments in an age-appropriate way Ensure all (conflicting and ambivalent) elements of values and attitude are discussed Help learners to weigh positive and negative advantages of each opinion	Debates, group discussions, brainstorming sessions and interactive theatre Different forms of "barometer" with poles (agree – disagree)
Cope with social influence	Stating that everyone shares a social norm and therefore everyone must adhere to this norm	Encourage learners to seek social support from supportive peers, parents and other trusted adults Correct misconceptions about social/peer norms that hinder enjoyable, consensual, healthy and safe behaviour Make sure learners know where and how to get professional support, if needed	Discussions about misconceptions, tasks to explore supportive and trusted people in their environment, sessions in which young people plan how to seek support, assignments to explore social norms in the community and discuss in the class Field trip to professional support services (e.g. youth-friendly counselling office)
Learn necessary skills	Telling learners about skills	Skills training, whereby learners should have positive experiences and positive feedback Provide different possibilities so that learners can practise and deepen skills.	Interactive demonstrations and instructions – for example, showing the use of a condom Role-model stories in videos, written materials (positive role models) Role-plays Implement communication structures in the classroom, e.g. discussion rules in working together

CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT
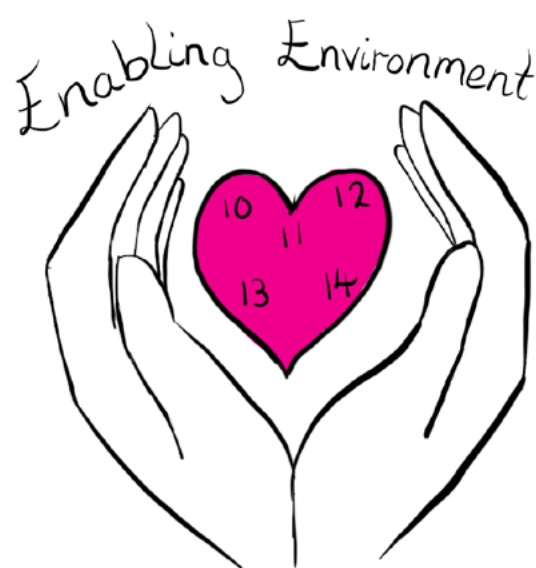
STANDARD 10: SUPPORTIVE WHOLE SCHOOL

CSE programmes are supported by **an enabling environment in the school/organisational setting.**

INTRODUCTION

Introducing a CSE programme in a school/organisation is not an automatic process. Before a programme can be delivered, stakeholders of the school/organisation should show support for CSE – the governing body, teaching and non-teaching staff in a school, parents, learners/children, adolescents, and young people. Only once these stakeholders are involved, can the school/organisation structurally include CSE in the workplan or community work. In this standard we focus mainly on getting support within the school/organisation setting. Standard 13 focuses on gathering support and advocating for CSE in the wider community.
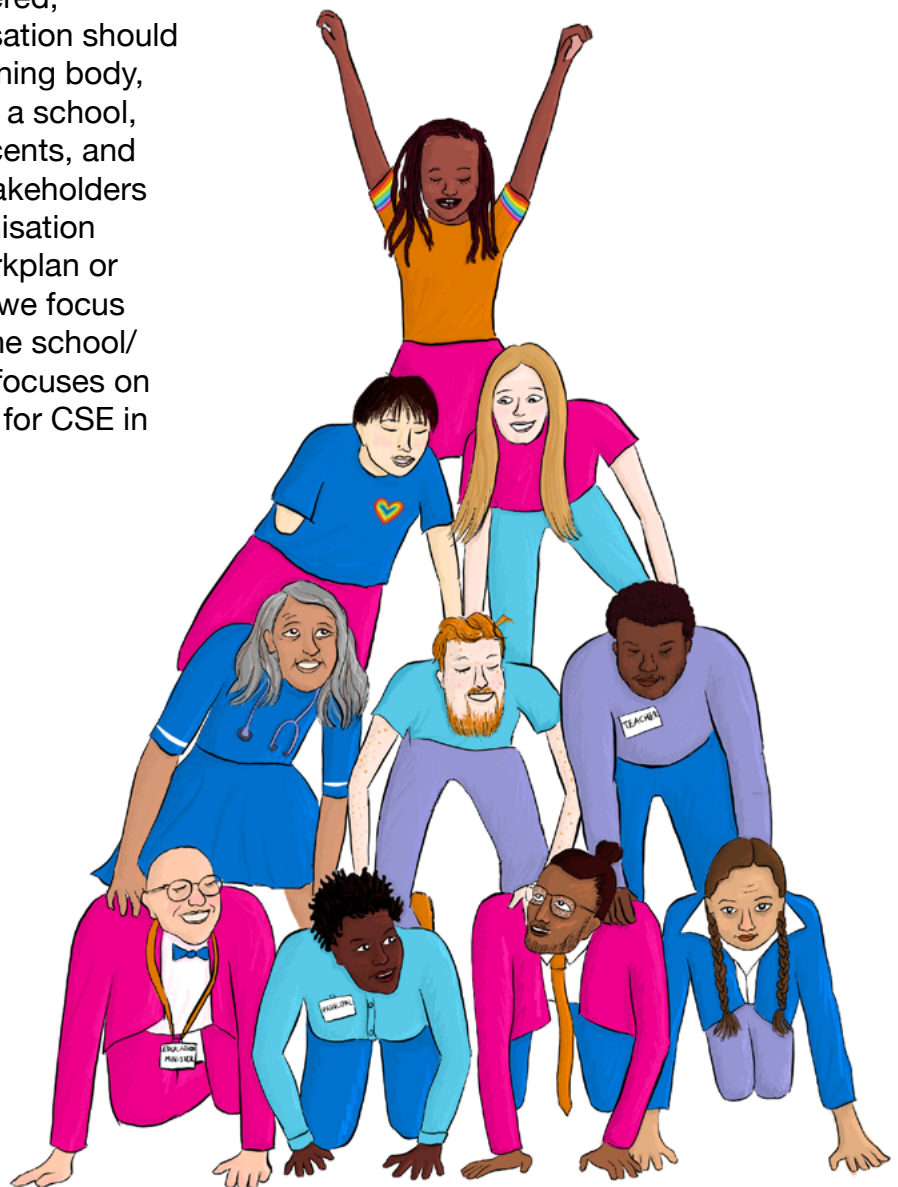
HOW DOES IT WORK IN PRACTICE?

At the school/organisation management level

Getting the overall school management/organisational authority involved is crucial. First, management is expected to take the lead in motivating and supporting CSE educators, as well as creating the right climate in which to implement CSE and address the needs of young people. **Where there is uncertainty, conflict or opposition to CSE, the capacity to lead among managers and teachers can make the difference between programmatic interventions that succeed and those that fail.** As CSE will address sensitive and sometimes controversial topics, the programme needs to be backed by supportive and inclusive policies, in order to:

* provide an institutional basis for implementing CSE programmes;
* anticipate and address sensitivities concerning the implementation of CSE programmes;
* set standards for confidentiality;
* set standards for appropriate behaviour, child protection and anti-bullying policies;
* ensure continuous capacity-building for teachers/educators.

The school management needs to:

* Ensure a safe and conducive school environment for all learners, independent of age, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, HIV status and disability. This conducive environment includes safety outside the classroom such as during play and recreation time.
* Protect and support educators who are responsible for delivering CSE. Educators may feel threatened by parents or representatives of the community. Don't forget that they are also part of the community, they may be parents, and may feel concerned about their status and place in the community or in their own family.
* Give incentives to educators who want to provide CSE by increasing their status in the school/organisation.

At the educators' level

Educators are central to the implementation of CSE. They need to have the confidence, commitment and resources to be able to teach the more complex issues of sexuality and SRH. To implement the CSE curriculum, they need to feel supported and have access to training and resources (Standard 6). CSE is not the effort or the responsibility of one teacher/educator, but should be a joint effort whereby researchers, educators and stakeholders can support each other and share experiences of implementing the CSE programme.

At the learners' level

Lack of motivation among learners can be an obstacle for educators wishing to introduce CSE. Young people want to learn about sex and sexuality and many of them consider sexuality educators as a relevant source of information (Pound et al., 2016; Hessling, 2017). When learners trust sexuality educators, they will confide in them when they have questions or have experienced situations in which they did not feel safe.

CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

ENABLING FACTORS	CHALLENGING FACTORS
Characteristics of the curriculum:	
Scientifically based There is room for adaptation to context	Too many sessions Information not relevant for our learners
Role of management:	
Active support for CSE teachers/educators Communicate about the programme in the organisation and introduce the programme to all staff	CSE is not considered important enough or needs too much financial/other investment No structural integration into overall programme
Role of teachers:	
Feel safe and supported by management Have enough training Policies to protect teachers/ children/young people	Need to invest too much time to prepare Feel embarrassed to discuss sexuality with learners; difficult subjects to discuss Have fears about consequences for status as teacher/educator May be the only CSE educator in the school/organisation
Role of young people/learners:	
Are involved in the introduction/design/delivery of the CSE programme	No trust in educator/teacher Feel the curriculum does not address their needs and wants

✓ TIPS

- Keep all staff of the organisation/school informed and up to date: give notice when the CSE sessions are to take place.

- Ensure everyone knows about existing policies to protect children/young people/ teachers/educators.

- Coach and support teachers/educators when they feel unsure or face problems during the CSE sessions.

- Invite children, adolescents, and young people to participate in intergenerational spaces to discuss the benefits and challenges for introducing CSE.

- Identify champions (among teachers/ educators and young people) in your school/organisation who are willing to play a more active role in delivering CSE.

CSE programmes promote and facilitate the meaningful engagement of children, adolescents and young people throughout all stages of the project cycle to ensure programmes respond to their needs and preferences.

INTRODUCTION

It is well acknowledged that children, adolescents and young people should participate in the programmes that affect them. Plan International's Global Approach to Programme and Influence emphasises that children, adolescents, and young people are active participants in our work. Such participation must be: transparent and informative, voluntary, respectful, relevant, child-friendly, gender equitable and inclusive, sensitive to risk, supported by training and accountable.
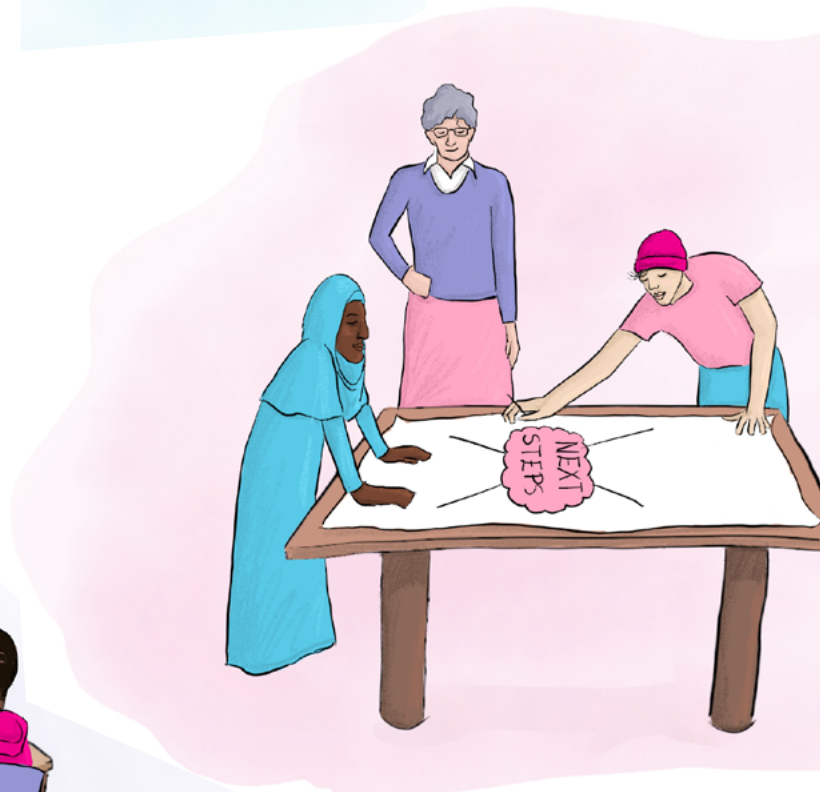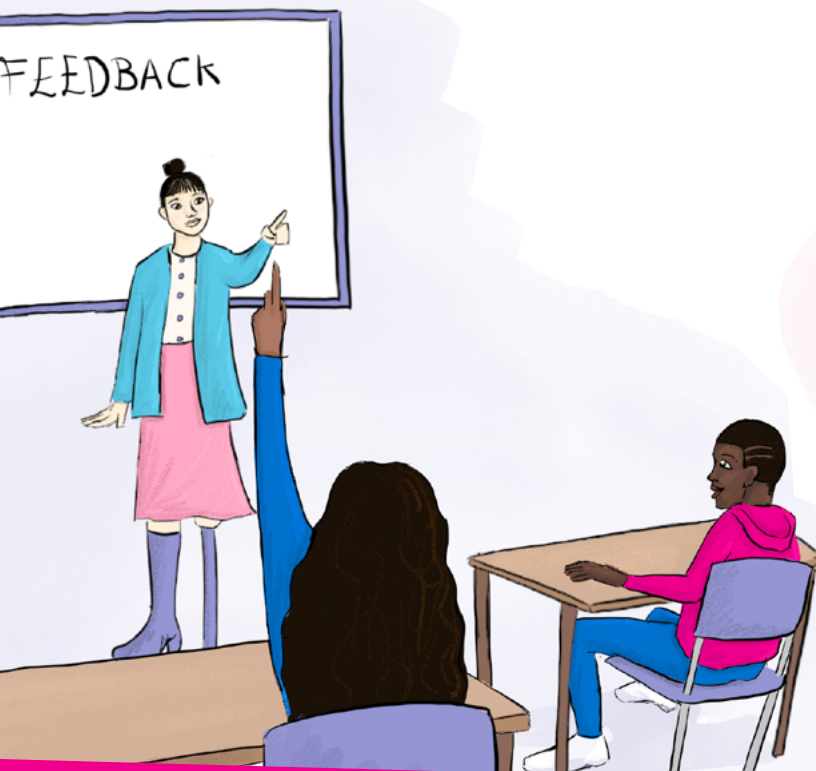
There are several reasons for young people to participate, including that participation is a right. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child enshrines children's participation rights in Articles 12 and 13. Increasing youth participation in planning, implementation and evaluation of development activities that directly affect youth was also one of the promises made in the ICPD Programme of Action 1994. Participation is also a moral obligation – children, adolescents and young people should be involved in the decisions and programmes that affect them and be able to influence these in a way that addresses their felt needs and realities. Without truly understanding what they have to say about their issues, taking into account their evolving capacities (Standard 12) and their best interests.

Research shows that youth participation improves assets among young people:

- Social competences, including responsiveness, flexibility, empathy and caring, communication skills, a sense of humour and other social behaviours.
- Problem-solving skills, including the ability to think abstractly, reflectively and flexibly, as well as the ability to arrive at alternative solutions to cognitive and social problems.
- Autonomy, including a sense of identity, an ability to act independently and to exert control over one's environment.
- Sense of purpose and future, including having healthy expectations, goals, an orientation towards success, motivation to achieve, educational aspirations, hopefulness, hardiness and a sense of coherence (My Peer toolkit).

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO MEANINGFULLY ENGAGE YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGHOUT ALL STAGES OF THE PROJECT CYCLE?

Young people as co-designers of CSE
When you are designing or updating a CSE programme, you need to see children, adolescents and young people as agents of change. Bring them to the table to (re) design the programme. You will need to set up systems that give them the skills and capabilities to contribute, as well as equip the adults working with them to listen to them and value their experiences. In other words, you need to make sure that there is organisational readiness and programme readiness for a youth-adult partnership.

A youth-adult partnership (YAP) implies equality between generations; therefore, you will need to address intergenerational power dynamics, trust in young people's abilities and value their life experiences, and learn to share power with them. Your organisational culture may need to change – this includes making an explicit commitment to YAP with policies and financial allocations.

You will need to identify the children, adolescents, and young people whom you want to work with – i.e., the children, adolescents, and young people whom you will be reaching with your CSE programmes. The next step is to invest in developing the skills and capacities of both the young people and the adults to work in partnership. You will need to ensure that you consider the diversity of children, adolescents and young people too.

Young people's inputs will be crucial for:

- designing the curriculum – its content, cultural nuances and young people's realities, their own beliefs, attitudes and myths around sexuality and SRHR, and their sexual behaviours and practices;
- deciding the most effective way to deliver the programme – in-school or out-of-school, by adult facilitators or peer educators or a combination, frequency and timing of lessons, etc.
- establishing the links between CSE and adolescent and gender responsive health services
- agreeing on the expected outputs and key markers for good CSE sessions.

Young people as co-educators

As you implement the CSE programme, this group of young people should be involved in the training of CSE educators, and then in observing and monitoring CSE sessions. They should also be part of the team that ensures that quality CSE is being delivered and have mechanisms for reporting or redressing concerns. When working with young people, you will realise that it is not always possible to have the same group available for all inputs. This is why you need to establish an ongoing system of recruiting more young people from the target population. This must be budgeted for in your programme as ongoing training, face-to-face meetings, and some cost reimbursements (e.g. transport, communications/data packs, printing and stationery, refreshments) will occur. Provide leadership opportunities to those young people who have been involved since the beginning so that they train and transfer knowledge to the newer youth before moving on due to age, education, work or marriage, or other time commitments. For young people who have out-grown your programme, establish a mentorship system where they can continue to be involved if they so wish by being a buddy for the younger team members and helping them deal with challenges.

More young people can also be involved as CSE educators in partnership with adult educators. Training young people and adults together on CSE facilitation is not only good practice but also results in: adult facilitators getting a better understanding of how to approach topics with young people; and young facilitators getting the benefit of the adults' experience. Equipping young people with the confidence, knowledge, skills and attitudes to engage effectively with their peers on issues that concern them complements pedagogical approaches, and reinforces delivery of effective CSE (IPPF, 2016; Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2016).

Young people as researchers/evaluators

When you evaluate your CSE programme, young people must be part of the core team. Their perspectives will be essential in determining the success of the programme as well as getting an insider perspective on change stories. Work with the young people to define the evaluation methodology and key questions. You will need to train them on basic research skills including research ethics, conducting an interview, facilitating a focus group discussion, writing a case study and analysing data (Rutgers and IPPF, 2013). Remember that young people have diverse skills – some may be better at interviewing, while others may be better at

statistics. Make sure that they feel free to work on the aspects of the evaluation that play to their strengths and interests.

Young people as advocates

Young people can be the best advocates for including CSE in the school curriculum or encouraging policy makers to adopt policies that mandate the provision of CSE. They can speak from their realities and highlight the challenges faced by their peers due to the lack of CSE. Highlighting stories of change among young people who have received effective CSE can be a powerful tool to convince those who are opposed to its provision.

HOW DOES IT WORK IN PRACTICE?

To assess organisational readiness for a youth-adult partnership – i.e. seeing the young people as equal partners and sharing power – ask yourself and your team:

- Do we have a common understanding of the core values on youth participation?
- Are all staff convinced about promoting children's, adolescents', and young people's SRHR?
- Have all staff committed themselves to achieving and supporting youth participation at all decision-making levels of the CSE programme?
- Have there been opportunities for adult staff to learn about sharing power with young people?

You should create inclusive and participatory spaces. This means the following:

- Language used by all those involved is inclusive, non-discriminatory and gender neutral, and recognises diverse persons and experiences.
- People in power do not dominate

conversations or decision-making; values of democracy and fairness are used; girls and marginalised young people feel safe.
- Confidentiality is maintained.
- Trust is built between adults and young people such that they can feel free to express themselves to each other in a respectful and frank manner.
- There is zero tolerance for bullying, intimidation, harassment and discrimination of any kind.
- Young people are well-versed with the systems and processes of your organisation so they do not feel out of their depth.

✓ TIPS

- When designing the CSE programme, including the curriculum, listen to young people's needs and realities in their community and address them directly through the CSE content. So, consider the challenges they face around sexuality and SRHR, where they get their information and where/how they like to access services and support.
- When delivering CSE, ensure the schedule responds to where young people are located, whether they prefer sessions in school or out of school, whether they prefer sessions led by other young people or adults, on a daily/weekly basis and so on.
- Programme planners and educators need to model the values of democracy and equality, and a positive attitude towards learning. You should promote teamwork and transparent communication, and be able to understand and address power dynamics – not only between adults and young people, but also among young people themselves.
- Young people need to be trained alongside adult educators to be able to deliver a CSE curriculum and become effective peer facilitators. Young people should also

be engaged in other ways such as peer support, and promoting demand for and access to services.

- Provide young people with ongoing training and mentoring support, and supportive supervision and monitoring aimed at enhancing their skills and enabling self-assessment.
- Continue to expand the cohort of young people you work with throughout the life of the CSE programme to address young people moving on or dropping out due to other life commitments.
- Ensure young people are part of the evaluation team and receive organisational support when they provide constructive feedback to CSE educators or other implementers.
- Empower young people to take leadership and ownership over the programme, and claim and enjoy their sexual and reproductive rights, through advocacy and civic engagement.
- Think about youth engagement from the beginning and budget for it in your proposal – engaging young people meaningfully requires investment.

STANDARD 12: CAREGIVERS' INVOLVEMENT

CSE programmes support interventions with parents and caregivers to build their confidence and skills in talking to their children about sexuality from early childhood.

INTRODUCTION

A primary concern of parents/caregivers is to ensure the wellbeing, including the sexual wellbeing, of their children*. Parent engagement and communication about sexuality and health is pivotal to developing healthy decision-making skills in young people. Support from parents can enhance CSE provided in school or an informal setting. The key to respectful and effective partnership with parents lies in the general ethos of openness with parents, the community, and sources of outside support. Plan International wants to support parents and provide them with tools for how to support and respect the sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people.

Open, accurate and early communication about sexuality is necessary, but also difficult to achieve. Parents need resources with the most up-to-date facts about sexuality and sexual development and about how best to deliver positive sexuality messages that are rooted in the family's value system. Not having a good experience of sex education oneself makes it harder. This may help to explain why fathers are less likely than mothers to talk to their children about sex and relationships – as fathers often have had less sex education – so the cycle is perpetuated (Lehr et al., 2005).

*In this document we will use the term "parents" This includes caregivers, guardians and others directly involved in the daily lives of children, adolescents, and young people. This could be grandparents, aunts and uncles, and others

IMPORTANCE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The World Health Organization identified five dimensions of influence between parents and adolescents: connection, behaviour control, respect for individuality, modelling appropriate behaviour, and provision and protection. In particular, this sense of connectedness to the primary caregiver is vital to a young person's successful development (WHO, 2007).

Research also shows an association between parental communication, parenting style, and adolescent sexual activity and contraception use. For example, effective communication between parents and their children has been shown to delay sexual intercourse and increase contraceptive use (Simons et al., 2016). Other research shows that supportive parenting emerged as most influential with regard to avoid to adolescents' risky sexual behaviour (ibid.). This is supported by the study that reveals four aspects of parental involvement – shared dinner time, participation in shared activities, relationship quality and communication about sex – are significantly and independently related to sexual initiation (Advocates for Youth, 2008).

Even though the benefits of positive parental involvement are clear, there is a fine line between parents providing support and parents pushing their own values and beliefs on young people.

BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES TO PARENTS' COMMUNICATION WITH THEIR CHILDREN ABOUT SEX AND SEXUALITY

BENEFITS	CHALLENGES
• Talking about sex and sexuality can improve the parent's relationship with their children • Parents can contribute to the sexual wellbeing of their children, including preventing risky sexual behaviour • Parents have an emotional relationship with their child • Parents potentially have the time to talk in a spontaneous context (e.g. while watching a TV programme) • Parents can transmit their personal and community values and views • Parents have unique knowledge of the child – although they don't know everything • Siblings and other relatives can contribute • Parents can set the tone about sex and relationships before children go to school • Parents can be advocates for good CSE for their children	• Parents can have too much control over the (sexual) life of their children • Parents may feel embarrassed and not know when or how to start a conversation • Parents may not take the opinions and decisions of their children seriously • Parents' authority and boundary-setting role may mean children keep things from parents • Generational patterns around openness on sexuality get repeated • Home is not always a safe place • It depends how confident and comfortable parents are about sex and relationships

Children's rights and parental involvement

Plan International believes that, depending on the context of young people's lives, parents have to act in the best interests of their child. It is necessary to take a multidisciplinary approach to strengthen young people's autonomy and agency. There are two ways of considering children's rights: one is that children are socially competent and are entitled to the same rights as adults. The other, "the caretaker approach", assumes that children are not self-determining agents and do not possess the cognitive maturity to make decisions in their best interests, and therefore require others to act for them. When adults over-emphasise a "care-taker" approach, this assumes that children are not self-determining agents. It says that children do not possess the cognitive maturity to make decisions in their best interests, and therefore require others to act for them.

Communication between children and parents

Children who know that their parents are open to talking about sexuality are more willing to ask questions of their parents. As long as learners do not have the feeling that they will be judged, if they feel that their parents will respect their feelings and opinions, then they will be more willing to be open and will develop a trusting relationship with their parents.

One of the biggest challenges parents face when talking about sexuality is fear. Parents are often uncomfortable about broaching the subject because they are embarrassed: they may not have the right answers, they may look stupid if they cannot answer a question, if they speak about sex, they are encouraging sexual activity. Sometimes they simply feel that they won't make a difference because they believe that they can't influence young people on this topic. Young people can be equally as worried and embarrassed as their parents to start a conversation about sex – when and how to ask questions. Gender differences in parent–child communication about sex and relationships are repeatedly noted in research. The dominant pattern is that mothers communicate with their children more than fathers; and that same-sex communication (mother–daughter and father–son) is more common than mother–son or father–daughter communication. Research shows that girls are more comfortable talking with their mothers compared to boys; very few boys and girls feel comfortable to talk about sex with their father (Wight et al., 2006).

While some parents believe that they should be the only source of information on sexuality for their children, most value getting external support to teach them how to discuss "sex" issues with their children. They like support on how to react to tricky situations (e.g. when a child watches pornography or is bullied in school), and how to access and provide accurate information.

A safe home environment

There are many different kinds of families. Many of them are warm and loving. They may be able to discuss sex and sexuality with their children; and create a safe environment, where children, adolescents, and young people can ask questions without fear. Often there are families that are more closed and parents or elders expect obedience from their children. Such families may not encourage children, adolescents, and young people to ask questions. Teachers and educators may find some resistance to discuss CSE lessons with these children, adolescents, and young people. Unfortunately, many children grow up without a loving and warm relationship, and without mutual trust. There are children who are neglected and deprived of a safe environment. A teacher/educator will find it difficult to get in contact with these families about any issue,

including CSE. Teachers/educators need to be aware of the circumstances of their learners and ensure the child(ren) are safe.

Parents and children with disabilities
Children with disabilities often have faced discrimination and may live in isolation. Families or caregivers may not send their children with disabilities to school or other activities, due to stigma or they may not see the need. Parents may also isolate children with disabilities to protect them in fear of bullying, insecurity or abuse. Sexuality of persons and youth with disabilities is often a taboo. For some parents of children with disabilities, puberty is a time when they need to "accept" their child again, realising that their child is becoming an adult. Many parents find it difficult to talk about sex and relationships with their children, in particular with children with intellectual impairments. Girls and young women with disabilities are often treated as children and are not allowed to make decisions about their own bodies, sexuality, and lives. Family members or caretakers may take these decisions on their behalf, which creates also a risk that the needs of families and caretakers are leading, instead of the rights of girls and young women with disabilities. It is crucially important to reach parents, families and communities to discuss about rights and participation of children and adolescence with disability and the importance of CSE for children and adolescence with disabilities. To build relationship with trust, encourage the caregivers to be open about their concerns, including safety, and search or introduce solutions to overcome the barriers. It can be helpful to contact organizations with disabilities, possibly also putting parents in contact with families in similar situations.

Parents and LGBTIQ children
For young LGBTIQ people it is often very difficult to "come out" to their parents and family. They fear rejection and very negative reactions. Some parents do reject their child for being LGBTIQ, they try to change them, are shocked, or are silent. They may see homosexuality or being transgender as a kind of disease that needs to be cured. Each family brings different dynamics, experiences, and strengths to finding out that their child is lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. Some families can quickly learn to support their LGBTIQ children. Some may have been accepting before they knew or perceived that their child was LGBTIQ. Others need individual support to adjust to having a child that may be LGBTIQ. Often putting parents in contact with parents in similar situations who have accepted their child can be extremely helpful (Ryan, 2014) (Standard 11).

HOW DOES IT WORK IN PRACTICE?

Programmes for parents
Parents' needs and questions about discussing sexuality with their children can be addressed through a stand-alone programme or one which happens at the same time or even in advance of a CSE programme for children.

Programmes that are specifically designed to reach parents can provide an excellent opportunity to learn how to communicate effectively with young people about sensitive issues like sexuality. This is especially true among communities with a higher incidence of unhealthy sexual outcomes, such as pregnancy among young people and sexually transmitted infections. Such programmes can educate parents on childhood development and can help to build strong family relationships, so that children, adolescents, and young people can become autonomous decision makers.

Parallel programmes orient parents on the content of their children's learning and equip them with skills to communicate with their children more openly and honestly about sexuality, putting their fears to rest and supporting the programme's efforts in delivering quality CSE.

A positive outlook on respect for cultural norms and values will increase parents' trust in the programme's ability to address issues about sexuality education. General good practice includes respecting cultural values, parents' opinions and parental support – all of these will have a positive impact on the effectiveness of CSE in school. Some parents may have strong views and concerns about the effects of CSE. Sometimes, these concerns are based on limited information or misapprehensions about the nature and effects of CSE, or perceptions of norms in society.

Before you decide how to involve parents you need to find out what are parents' main concerns. **In general, parents want the "best" for their children – though how this is defined can differ.** Most parents want to protect their children from unwanted social influences. Thus, they may think and act from a perspective of worry or fear. Understanding and addressing those fears and worries is key to getting positive involvement and agreement from parents about the CSE lessons.

Several ways to involve parents
Schools/organisations can promote dialogues about sexual values with parents and with parents in religious, cultural and social organisations, while providing the skills and factual information that all learners need. One way to increase parent-to-child communication about sexuality is to provide homework assignments for learners that require them to discuss selected topics with parents or other trusted adults (Kirby, 2007). If sexuality educators and parents support each other in implementing a guided and structured teaching/learning process, the chances of personal growth for children, adolescents, and young people are likely to be much better. Also, establishing a good partnership and communication between parents, sexuality educators and learners helps to deliver CSE effectively. Especially with younger learners, parents could be directly involved in undertaking education projects in sexuality education, e.g. teaching children about their different senses and feelings.

There are several ways to involve and get the support of parents:

By letter
Inform parents about CSE by letter or newsletter. Some schools communicate regularly with parents through (news)letters. Many parents appreciate this and find this kind of involvement enough. For example, the governance of the school can give comprehensive information, or use a meeting to ask parents for their reactions and objections and then can discuss these.

Parents' meeting in the school/organisation

If the parents do not live too far away, a meeting for parents held before the start of the CSE lessons is highly effective and appreciated.

Separate mothers' and fathers' meetings

Sometimes parents are not able to come together to a parents' meeting or do not feel comfortable to sit together and discuss CSE Topics. In these cases, several schools have good experiences with separate mothers' meetings and fathers' meetings. Some fathers seem to feel more free and comfortable to listen and discuss their specific role in sexuality education when they are among others who they perceive to be likeminded. Emphasise the key role for fathers and show them evidence on the positive effects of involved fatherhood (Pro Mundo and Rutgers, 2016).

✓ TIPS

FOR PARENTS	FOR LEARNERS
• You can learn to talk about sex. If you are uncomfortable with saying sexual words out loud you can practice them – alone, with your partner, or in conversations with a friend – until they feel natural.	• You can help parents to overcome their awkwardness by being always open and honest.
• Listen to your child; show you are open to their questions and opinions.	• Find the right moment: sometimes it helps to talk about sex without looking directly at your parent, e.g. while doing the chores around the house together.
• You need to brush up on some basic facts to provide your child with accurate knowledge about safer sex, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV.	• Don't give up, walk away or get angry if you feel your parents don't listen or don't understand you; they need some time to understand and adjust to the fact you are growing up and have your own opinions.
• You need to provide values about sex. Standards of behaviour are good for your children. Your children want and need sensible guidelines from their parents.	• Share leaflets and brochures on sex education with your parents; they might need the information as much as you do.
• You need to recognise and validate your child's feelings. This is a unique opportunity to get to know your child better.	• Ask your parent how they coped with asking these questions when they were young.
• Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know the answer to that question." But, be sure to follow up with, "let's find out together!" – and then do so.	• At the end of the day, your parents are still captain of the family "ship"; but that doesn't mean that you cannot help them to guide it safely into the harbour.
• Don't condemn your child; you can disagree with their behaviour but don't humiliate them.	
• Be a good role model!	
•	

There are many ways for parents to become "askable parents": being available; being approachable; being supportive; revisiting topics; using intuition; employing humour; giving unconditional respect; being open and honest; listening; and checking out understanding (Walker, 2001). Depending on the age and development of their children, parents need to communicate in different ways about sex (CSE Topics Overview).

• Make sure that parents know that their values are meaningful for the teacher/educator and the school/organisation respects their responsibility for their children, but also that children have their own right to information and the school/organisation has a mandate to teach these issues.
• Contact or inform parents before the start of the CSE lessons.
• Always answer the questions and concerns of parents honestly.
• Find "champions" among parents in the community who support CSE.

Plan International has also developed key messages for adolescents and parents on CSE.

Supporting Guidance:
• Key messages for adolescents
• Key messages for parents
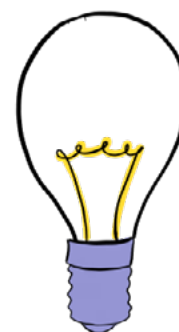
**CSE ensures strong linkages with relevant adolescent and gender-responsive health services** locally, and with child protection services that are also relevant for younger children.

INTRODUCTION

CSE contributes to the right of young people to lead healthy and safe SRH lives. Young people need to have the physical, mental and sexual health to be able to perform and learn in school or any other educational settings. Until we address the mental, physical and emotional health of young people, including SRH, learning inequalities will persist. Access to health and other services, including social work, legal support and child protection services, are necessary to ensure learners' wellbeing and readiness to learn.
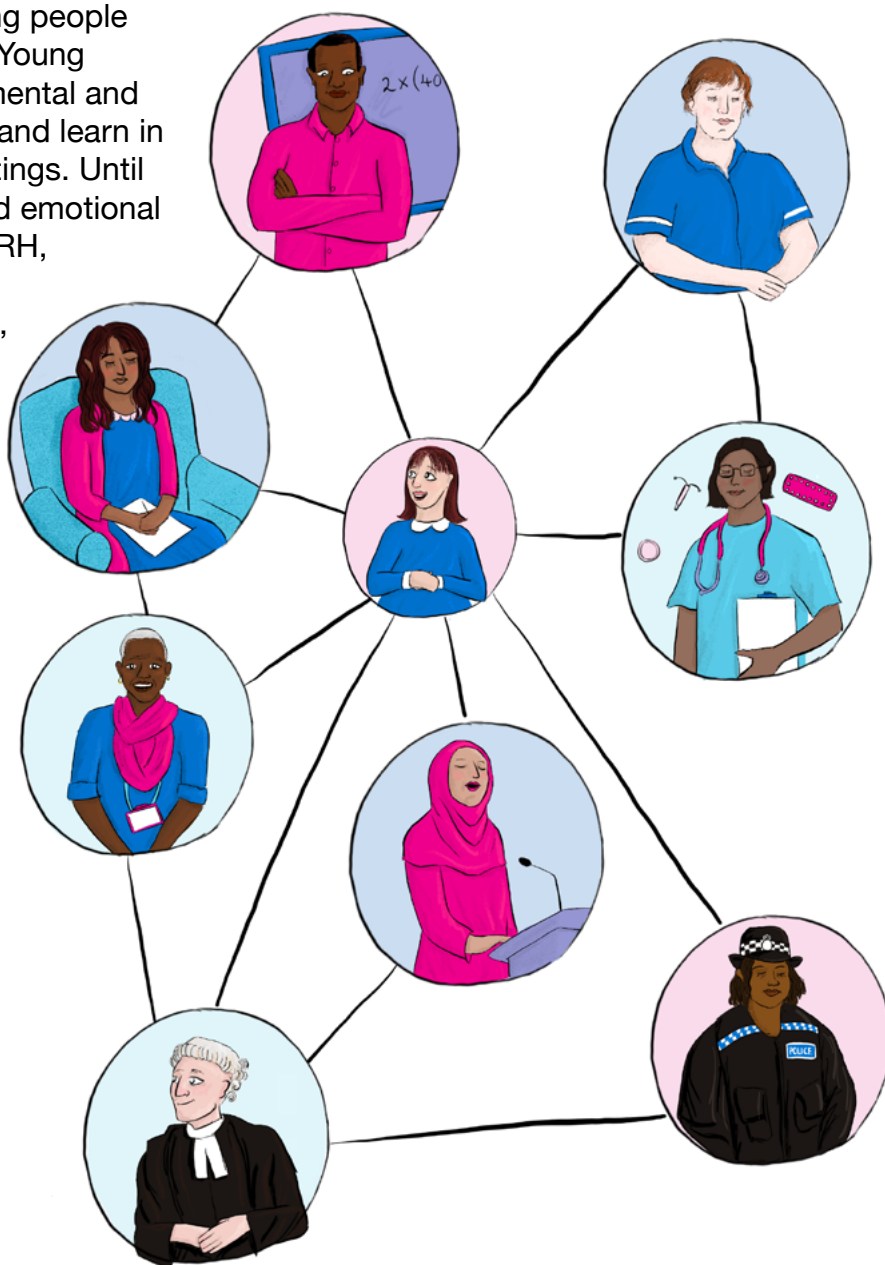
CSE DOES NOT STOP AT THE SCHOOL GATE

Young people's physical, emotional and mental health extends beyond the educational setting. CSE needs to facilitate access to SRH services including contraceptives, STI/HIV treatment and safe abortion care where legal. Therefore, CSE should include information on where to access contraception, SRH, child protection and other relevant services locally, and/or online. Programmes also need provide clear information on how age of consent laws/policies relate to young people's access to services, including where age of consent is different for boys and girls, or married and unmarried young people.

Role of outside health providers/ professionals

- Some schools/organisations have their own in-house counsellors while others have a referral system to ensure that young people are directed to service providers that deliver the care or support they need.

- Service providers and other professionals can also be key supporters or deliverers of CSE. For example: in small facilities, nurses or social workers already play a role in educating learners. They can run waiting room activities or do outreach work to bring information and services to the community.

- Service providers and other professionals can support the school/organisation to advocate for CSE programmes in school.

A two-way relationship is needed between educators and health providers and other relevant professionals. As children's and young people's SRHR literacy increases, it is expected that they will be more willing to ask questions about their choices and treatments. Educators need to be prepared for that and find the information they need. CSE can create demand among young people for adolescent and gender-responsive services. Health providers and other professionals should be ready to see, support and treat young people in an adolescent and gender responsive way.

HOW DOES IT WORK IN PRACTICE?

To make effective connections and linkages with service and other relevant providers you need to understand the local context and understand the needs, conditions and resources of your community (Standard 1).

Develop a referral list
Develop a referral list by using names and contact data of health professionals, like doctors and nurses near your school/organisation. Not only collect their contact data but check their competence and their values around sexual issues and young peoples' sexuality. It would be even better to have a personal talk with these experts before putting them on your referral list.

The experts on your referral list could vary from doctors and nurses in adolescent and gender-responsive clinics to lawyers, police, psychologists, social workers and midwives. They should work in an adolescent and gender-responsive way (which means non-judgmental and confidential) and use evidence-based and

rights-based methods towards young clients. Update your referral list frequently.

Visit a health clinic with learners
With your learners, you can pay a visit to the health clinic and ask the doctors and nurses to explain what they do and how a regular session with a client works. This will make the learners less anxious to go to the health clinic if they need it or if you have to refer them.
If you want to involve the health clinic in your CSE lessons and make your learners acquainted with the clinic, you should first find out whether this clinic is adolescent and gender-responsive. To be sure you are referring your learner to a adolescent and gender-responsive clinic, the services/providers need to be:

• Able and willing to provide SRH services and information to all young people, including young people with disabilities and young people who identify as LGBTIQ
• non-judgmental
• promoting children, adolescents and young people's rights, especially the right to privacy and confidentiality
• positive and/or accepting of young people's sexual behaviour and relationships
• knowledgeable about adolescent SRHR
• able and willing to give access to contraceptives to prevent pregnancy, STIs and HIV within the laws/policies of your country
• skillful in understanding the signs of sexual abuse or violence and know how to follow up.

Invite health and other professionals during the CSE programme
Invite someone from an SRH clinic to your CSE lessons to explain how the clinic works when one of your learners needs to go to a doctor or needs a health check. The health provider

should emphasise the rule of confidentiality in the clinic. Encourage your learners to ask the health provider questions about how the health clinic works. Ask your learners to write their questions down on small papers (anonymously) beforehand. This will help them to ask more sensitive questions. For instance, questions about their HIV-status.

You can also invite an expert on specific issues including sexual abuse as a guest to your CSE session.

Invite service and other providers and professionals to sessions with parents and community members
They can share the facts and the challenges that young people face and how CSE can have a positive impact.

WHEN YOU SUSPECT A LEARNER HAS AN SRH PROBLEM

During CSE lessons, you may notice that one of your learners has a problem. Here are some examples that could be signs of a problem, including of abuse:

• continuous inappropriate (sexually tinted) language and/or behaviour
• loss of self-confidence or self-esteem
• social withdrawal or a loss of interest or enthusiasm
• headaches or stomach aches with no medical cause
• avoidance of certain situations, such as refusing to do group work or join a bus ride
• never responding in the group or to questions you are asking
• physical signs, including bruises.

Be aware that all these signs can also be signs of other physical or emotional problems, not related with sexual abuse.

It is possible that a friend of a learner may share their friend's problem with you. This is not an easy situation, but you can ask the learner, who may be in trouble, to see you after the lesson.

Start with a neutral question, e.g. how the learner is doing. Don't immediately ask whether there is a problem but share your concerns and assure that you are there to help them. Promise that the discussion will be confidential, except when the learner is in immediate danger. Assure the learner that no action or involvement of outsiders will happen without the consent of the learner. Abuse that is happening in the community/family needs to be addressed, e.g. sexual abuse by parents and others, forced and early marriage.

Apart from individual help, these issues need another approach, which requires establishing relationships with community stakeholders, the police, etc. Your school/organisation needs to have a child protection policy, so that you know what to do in serious situations, e.g. allegations of abuse by other teachers (Standard 5).

✓ TIPS

• Ensure that young people know their rights, know where to go and are equipped to talk to service providers

• Make information available on legal issues regarding the SRH of children, adolescents, and young people.

• Have supportive policies, strategies and linkages with services for vulnerable and excluded young people including: pregnant girls, young people living with HIV, young people living with disabilities.

• Identify health providers and other relevant professionals who have regular contact with children, adolescents, and young people.

• Ask outside professionals to deliver factual information for young people, parents and other community members.

• Ask for feedback from professionals about gaps in information and knowledge that they have identified in children, adolescents, and young people who access referral services.

• Discuss with health providers and others (social workers, community workers, police) how best to interact with and respond to children, adolescents, and young people, especially children, adolescents, and young people who express signs of physical or emotional problems.

STANDARD 14: POLICIES AND LAWS

CSE programmes are supported by appropriate legislation and policies.

INTRODUCTION

Schools and organisations that provide CSE do not work in isolation. They need support from their community and from local/national governments, particularly to enable the programmes to go to scale.

At the policy level, a well-developed national policy on sexuality education may be explicitly linked to education sector plans, as well as to the national strategic plan and policy framework on HIV and SRH (UNESCO, 2018).

Once supportive policies for CSE are in place, follow-up work is required to ensure their implementation. The aim would be to ensure that relevant ministries have made resource allocations towards, for example, training teachers on CSE, providing CSE-related teaching and learning materials, monitoring evaluation and learning for CSE, and linkages to adolescent and gender-responsive services.

In any project/advocacy initiative, it is important to identify at which level we want to make a difference or bring about change. At international level, governments make commitments at international and UN forums for which they need to be held accountable once back at home. At the national or state level, ministries of education, health or youth can play a critical role in building consensus on the understanding and need for CSE.

GENDER JUSTICE FOR ALL!
SRHR ARE HUMAN RIGHTS

DIVERSE CSE FOR ALL

I'M MARCHING FOR BETTER TEACHER TRAINING

STRONGER TOGETHER

EVERYONE DESERVES A VOICE, NO MATTER WHAT AGE

Advocating for CSE requires a step-by-step approach (IPPF, 2011):

At local level
Government officials, community leaders, parents and community-based organisations can play a critical role in building consensus on the understanding of and need for CSE. This can be done by consultation and training for key stakeholders, including, for example:

- young people, represented in all their diversity, and organisations that work with them
- parents and parent-teacher associations
- local government officials in charge of health and others concerned with the needs of young people
- educational professionals and institutions, including teachers, head teachers and training institutions
- community leaders, religious leaders and faith-based organisations
- teachers' trade unions
- media
- researchers
- LGBTIQ groups, disabled people's organisations
- NGOs, particularly those working on SRH with young people.

At the school/organisation level
The involvement of the management or authority at the school/organisation is crucial.

HOW DOES IT WORK IN PRACTICE?

Building trust and support for CSE needs a step-by-step approach.

Developing a justification for CSE
A clear rationale for introducing CSE can be developed on the basis of evidence from the local/national situation and needs

assessments. (Standard 1).

Apart from using these research data, it is important to include more positive messages about the importance of health and wellbeing of children, adolescent and young people, of their having happy and healthy current and future relationships, and of being safe on the internet.

National task forces
In some countries, ministries of education have set up national advisory councils and/or task force committees to inform the development of relevant policies, the development and/or improvement of the national curriculum, to generate support for programmes, and to assist in the development and implementation of sexuality education programmes. Council and committee members tend to include national experts and practitioners in SRH, human rights, education, gender equality, youth development and education, and may also include young people. Individually and collectively, council and committee members are often able to participate in sensitisation and advocacy, review draft materials and improvements in the national curriculum and policies, and develop a comprehensive workplan for classroom delivery, together with plans for monitoring and evaluation (UNESCO, 2018).

Gathering support
There can be a lot of resistance to CSE. There are many reasons for this, including "perceived" or "anticipated" resistance resulting from misunderstandings about the nature, purpose and effects of sexuality education. Evidence suggests that many people, including education ministry staff, organisations, school principals and teachers/educators, may not be convinced of the need to provide sexuality education, or else are reluctant to provide it because they lack the

confidence and skills to do so (Kirby, 2007). Teachers' personal or professional values could also be in conflict with the issues they are being asked to address, or else there is no clear guidance about what to teach and how to teach it (Standard 2). Showing evidence that clearly gives data on the positive effects of CSE programmes is necessary to support sensitisation and awareness-raising activities. There are several programmes by international NGOs as well as government agencies, which are well documented and provide this kind of evidence. Some are given here for reference:

- UNESCO (2015). Emerging Evidence, Lessons and Practice in Comprehensive Sexuality Education: A Global Review
- UNESCO (2017). CSE Scale-Up in Practice: Case Studies from Eastern and Southern Africa
- Lundgren, R., Beckman, M., Chaurasiya, S.P., Subhedi, B. and Kerner, B. (2013). "Whose turn to do the dishes? Transforming gender attitudes and behaviours among very young adolescents in Nepal", Gender & Development, 21(1): 127–145, DOI: 10.1080/13552074.2013.767520
- Refer to journals such as Sex Education and the Journal of Adolescent Health for the latest, peer-reviewed articles on CSE programmes globally.

The need for champions
Champions could be experts and (young) volunteers from inside and outside the educational field who believe in the importance of CSE. They understand the local context and are valued by the communities. Through their networks, they can help to raise awareness about the positive impact of CSE on the health and emotional wellbeing of young people. They can help to campaign in school or community settings, work with social media and the press, and can help to ensure that the

technical standards of CSE are understood and implemented. They can also help to "translate" research data about the need for and the positive effects of CSE into more understandable language.

Working with parents
The cooperation and support of parents, families and other community actors should be sought from the outset and regularly reinforced as young people's perceptions and behaviours are greatly influenced by family and community values, social norms and conditions. It is important to emphasise the shared primary concern of schools and parents with promoting the safety and wellbeing of children, adolescents, and young people. Ensuring that they understand, support and get involved in the delivery of CSE is essential to ensure long-term results (Standard 5).

Working with community leaders including faith-based organisations
Community leaders can pave the way for acceptance and can support the implementation of CSE in school or in non-formal settings. It is crucial to work with them to counter inaccurate information and to dispel existing myths and misconceptions around SRH in the community. They can give their support to contextualise the content of the programme. Religious and faith-based organisations play an important role in the lives of many communities. It is important that we keep a dialogue going with such groups and with young people of different faiths. It is only through discussion that we can begin to address complex issues around CSE. Most religions promote building healthy and loving relationships free from coercion and abuse. All religions want young people to be healthy and happy. Dialogues can help to find the balance between what religion teaches them, what is scientific evidence, and what is the reality of young people's lives.

Youth involvement

Dialogue between different stakeholders, especially between young people and adults, could be considered as one of the strategies to build support. Young people can play multiple roles. For example, they can identify some of their particular concerns and commonly held beliefs about sexuality, identify real-life situations and scenarios that young people encounter, suggest activities that address such concerns, help make role-play scenarios more realistic, and suggest refinements in all activities during pilot-testing (Kirby, 2007). Young people can become partners in advocating for CSE in the community.

Although there has been a lot of debate about the value of peer education, with some arguing that peer education is ineffective in behaviour change, other evidence shows that young people can play an effective role in complementing CSE programmes by discussing issues with their peers, which they find difficult to discuss with teachers or educators (Haberland and Rogow, 2015) (Standard 3). This involvement as peer educators plays a vital role in enabling learners to see the peer educators as role models, understand different points of view on an issue from their peers, and contribute to empowering young people and enabling their active citizenship.

Using media and other gatekeepers

The mass media – television, newspapers, magazines and the internet – are important gatekeepers for CSE; they can have a big impact on people's ideas and misconceptions on CSE. However, they are not always concerned with the outcome of their pervasive messages. Therefore, it is important to give evidence around CSE.

KEY STEPS IN ADVOCACY

1. Identify your key ask or goal for CSE – what needs to change.
2. Identify who can make this change happen.
3. How can you influence your advocacy target to make this change happen.
4. Think about others you can work with – allies, partners, including young people.
5. Bear in mind any obstacles or opposition you might face and how to overcome them.

Refer to the following documents for responses to common concerns or oppositions on CSE:
- UNESCO (2018). UNESCO (2018). International technical guidance on sexuality education: An evidence-informed approach. Revised edition, p. 84,
- IPPF (2017). DELIVER+ENABLE Toolkit: Scaling-up comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), London: IPPF (page 45)

Programmers
- Effective messages have five important components: content that is relevant and accurate; language that is clear and appropriate for your audience; messaging that is credible and motivating; format; and channels of communication that are appropriate for your audience – for example, how CSE can be beneficial for learners or how the delivery of CSE can have a positive impact on the teaching of other issues.

Children, adolescents, and young people as enablers
- Involve children, adolescents, and young people in all advocacy efforts on CSE. They can lead some of these efforts, represent the school/organisation in task forces, provide advice to strengthen an advocacy strategy and serve as key speakers in public arenas (Standard 4).
- Enable youth-led organisations and movements to develop CSE advocacy strategies so they can be the voice of young people.

Working with policy makers
- Identify champions, e.g. parliamentarians' groups sensitised on issues of SRHR. They can be key allies during debates on CSE inclusion in formal curricula.
- Develop key messages that parliamentarians can use in debates, speeches or meetings with the communities they represent.

Active collaboration with teachers and school personnel
- Work with teachers' associations to support their advocacy efforts to strengthen the recognition or inclusion of CSE in the school curricula.
- Identify champions who are willing to play a more active role in advocating for and demanding CSE.

Parents as enablers of CSE
- Identify champions in parents' associations or groups who will speak up about the importance of CSE. They can support you to convince other parents. Often parents feel that it is their role to give sexuality education. Ensure that the school/organisation will not take over their role but will be complementing the information that children, adolescents, and young people receive at home (see Standard 12).

Working with other influencers to enable CSE
- Identify supportive members of the community, including the faith-based community, to work with you and promote your messages. Ensure that you convince them that you have many messages in common and that CSE can help to build bridges between faith, culture and sexuality.
- Remember that some opposition groups resort to personal attacks and violence. Even though this could be rare, make sure you are prepared and that you are safe (get support from the authorities if necessary).
- Invite media to evidence-sharing sessions on CSE.
- Make agreements with media channels to share op-ed articles on CSE.

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES
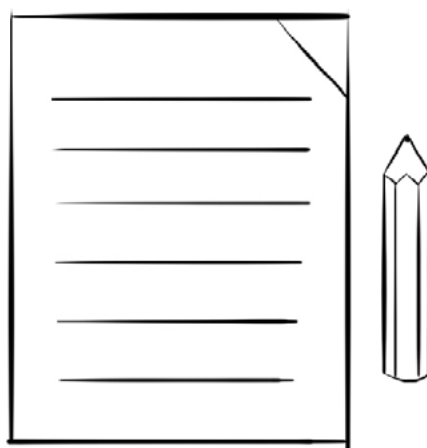
STANDARD 1: CONTEXT ANALYSIS

SRH data on adolescents
- Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS): in-country; Ministry of Demography
- UNFPA: SRH data per region/country. See: https://www.unfpa.org/data
- UNFPA: World Population Dashboard. See: https://www.unfpa.org/data/world-population-dashboard
- UNFPA: Adolescent Youth Dashboard https://www.unfpa.org/data/dashboard/adolescent-youth
- Guttmacher Institute, IPPF (2014).
- Demystifying Data: A Guide to Using Evidence to Improve Young People's Sexual Health and Rights. See: https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/pubs/demystifying-data.pdf
- WHO. Global Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents (AA-HA!): Guidance to support country implementation. See: http://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/topics/adolescence/framework-accelerated-action/en/

Gender based violence
- UNFPA. Gender-based Violence. See: https://www.unfpa.org/gender-based-violence
- Plan International. Ending violence against girls and women. See: https://plan-international.org/ending-violence/gender-based-violence

Pregnancy/maternal health
- WHO Guidelines: Preventing early pregnancy and poor reproductive outcomes among adolescents in developing countries. See: http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/adolescence/9789241502214/en/
- WHO: Countries. See: http://www.who.int/countries/en/
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Abortion
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Laws
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- Plan International (2018?) Advancing Children's rights and equality for girls. Our global approach and Influence
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- UNESCO (2020) Switched On: Sexuality education in the digital space
- WHO (n.d.) Chapter 4: Condom and Lubricant Programming, https://www.who.int/hiv/pub/sti/sex_worker_implementation/swit_chpt4.pdf?ua=1

Examples of comprehensive CSE curricula/ programmes
- Pop Council and others: It's All One curriculum, guidelines and activities, https://www.popcouncil.org/research/its-all-one-curriculum-guidelines-and-activities-for-a-unified-approach-to-
- Rutgers: The world starts with me, Fact Sheet, https://www.rutgers.international/sites/rutgersorg/files/PDF/2014_FactsheetWSWM%20Eng_FINAL.pdf
- Sexuality and Life Skills toolkit, https://frontlineaids.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Sexuality-and-Life-skills-Toolkit.pdf

STANDARD 3: GENDER AND POWER

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- UNFPA (2015). The Evaluation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education Programmes: A Focus on the Gender and Empowerment Outcomes
- Zambia Community HIV Prevention Project (Z-CHPP) (2017). Stepping Stones: A Training Manual for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Relationship Communication Skills and Empowerment. Pact

STANDARD 4: POSITIVITY AND PLEASURE

Sexual rights of young people
- IPPF's Exclaim! – a young person's guide to sexual rights (in English, Spanish and French).
- IPPF's "Healthy, Happy and Hot" – a young persons' guide to their rights, sexuality and living with HIV (in English, Spanish and French).

A sex-positive approach to CSE
- IPPF tips for delivering sex-positive workshops for young people (in English, Spanish, French, Arabic).

Pleasure
- The Pleasure Project aims to promote safer sex by focusing on pleasure and desire.
  - They developed a comprehensive, free training toolkit that contains activities and ideas that could be used by individual counsellors or staff teams to encourage self-reflection and skills development.
  - They also produced a global mapping of pleasure – a directory of organisations, programmes, media and

people who eroticise safer sex.
- They have a literature review of the links between pleasure and safer sex
- RFSU (the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education) has sex-positive resources (in English and Swedish) containing comprehensive information and useful diagrams and images. This includes guides on clitoral sex, the vaginal corona (hymen), masturbation, female genitalia, male genitalia and working with young men. They also developed a sexuality education film for teenagers called 'sex on the map' (in Swedish with English or Spanish subtitles). Some of the material may not be suitable for learners in all cultural contexts but can help develop knowledge and understanding of sexuality, sexual pleasure and sexual response.
- Planned Parenthood in the US has a simple question and answer section about sexual pleasure on its client-focused website.
- The "Changing Lives" series features several IPPF MAs' CSE interventions, including the Nepal example, which mentions learning about sexual pleasure.
- Article in Vice – "Why don't we teach pleasure in sex ed"
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- pc/TEAM013/Shared%20Documents/Disability%20Inclusion%20Guidance%20(Version%201.0%20-%202017).pdf
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STANDARD 6: AGE AND STAGE

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STANDARD 12: CAREGIVERS' INVOLVEMENT

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About Plan International

We strive to advance children's rights and equality for girls all over the world. We recognise the power and potential of every single child. But this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination. And it's girls who are most affected. As an independent development and humanitarian organisation, we work alongside children, young people, our supporters and partners to tackle the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children. We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood, and enable children to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge. For over 80 years we have been building powerful partnerships for children, and we are active in over 75 countries.

Plan International

Global Hub
Dukes Court, Duke Street, Woking,
Surrey GU21 5BH, United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 1483 755155
Fax: +44 (0) 1483 756505
E-mail: info@plan-international.org

plan-international.org

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