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WHO Regional Office for Europe and BZgA

# Training matters: A framework for core competencies of sexuality educators



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Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA)  
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## Preface

Sexuality education is a vital approach for supporting children and young people in their sexual and general development. It enables them to increase their knowledge of sexual and reproductive health and rights and to develop their decision-making, communication and risk-reduction skills, as well as positive and responsible attitudes to sexuality and relationships.

Sexuality education supports children and young people in understanding and communicating about their emotions, bodies and actions, in critically reflecting upon their own behaviour and in taking autonomous and well-informed decisions regarding their sexuality. Sexuality education also contributes to the prevention of (sexual) violence, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies. In this regard, sexuality education connects the aim of preventing sexual and reproductive ill-health with the broader aim of well-being throughout the life-course.

Capacity-building is a crucial factor which facilitates an effective implementation of sexuality

education. The training of sexuality educators<sup>1</sup> is an essential part of capacity-building. Training supports the process of developing necessary competencies in educators which, in turn, increase the quality of education.

This framework focuses on sexuality educators and the competencies they should have, or develop, in order to conduct sexuality education. Educators' competencies in the areas of attitudes, skills and knowledge are taken into account and described in detail in Part 2 of this document.

The WHO Regional Office for Europe and the German Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA), a WHO collaborating centre for sexual and reproductive health, are committed to improving access to, and quality of, sexuality

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document, the term "sexuality educator" is used instead of "sexuality teacher". This reflects the fact that sexuality education may be conducted by various professional groups in different settings. Besides teachers in school, these may be, for instance, school health staff, childcare and youth workers, health clinic workers, counsellors, kindergarten teachers or day-care professionals.

education in the WHO European Region. In this area, BZgA and the Regional Office work closely with the European Expert Group on Sexuality Education. The aims of this collaboration are:

- To promote the implementation of, and access to, comprehensive sexuality education which protects and empowers children and young people and improves their health and well-being
- To develop documents and materials which support the Member States of the WHO European Region in the implementation and quality assurance of sexuality education programmes
- To foster research and good practice in sexuality education
- To enhance communication between different actors working in the field of sexuality education, and thereby increase networking and the exchange of knowledge and technical expertise

In the publication *Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe (WHO Regional Office for Europe and BZgA, 2010)*, the WHO Regional Office for Europe, BZgA and the members of the European Expert Group on Sexuality Education provide an overview of research results and definitions related to sexual and reproductive health and sexuality education and offer a detailed overview of topics, arranged by age group, which should be covered by sexuality education in countries of the WHO European Region. Subsequently published documents cover related topics, such as the implementation (*WHO Regional Office for Europe and BZgA, 2013*) and the evaluation (*Ketting et al., 2015*) of sexuality education.

The present framework for competencies of sexuality educators should be considered a follow-up to the previous collaborative work in the field of sexuality education of the WHO Regional Office for Europe, BZgA and the European Expert Group on Sexuality Education.

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# Abbreviations

<b>BZgA</b>	Federal Centre for Health Education
<b>ICT</b>	Information and communication technologies
<b>IPPF EN</b>	International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

## Part 1: Introduction

### What does this framework offer?

#### Main messages of this section:

- The framework is intended to support the implementation of training programmes for sexuality educators by enabling Member States to develop their own training manuals and methods
- It is primarily targeted at experts who develop curricula for the training of sexuality educators and at those who conduct the training
- It explains why training of sexuality educators is crucial for high-quality education and provides an overview of the kind of competencies they should acquire

This framework focuses on sexuality educators and the competencies they should have, or develop, in order to conduct sexuality education. It is primarily addressed to those who conduct the training of sexuality educators and to experts who develop the relevant curricula for this kind of training. It can also guide sexuality educators themselves in their own professional and personal development.

The framework is intended to provide support and to facilitate the implementation of training programmes for sexuality educators and/or improve the quality of existing programmes. It is intended as a foundation document to guide countries in the development of their own training manuals and methods. It does not itself propose detailed materials or methods, since these must be tailored to each national context.

This document answers the following questions:

- Why training for educators, and sexuality educators in particular, is essential to equip them to provide high-quality education
- What kind of competencies (attitudes, skills, knowledge) sexuality educators should have, or develop in the course of their training (based on children's rights and other human rights related to sexual and reproductive health)
- What examples of training programmes for sexuality educators exist throughout the WHO European Region

As the framework also provides background information about why training of sexuality educators is

crucial for their professional development and for the overall quality of sexuality education, the document can also be used to advocate for the development and implementation of sexuality education training programmes in the Member States of the WHO European Region.

The framework is based on a review of the international literature on both the general competencies of educators and the specific competencies needed to deliver sexuality education. The literature review was complemented by the individual expertise of the members of the European Expert Group on Sexuality Education and the country data and materials they provided.

The framework reflects several internationally recognized strategies and action plans.

- **The Action plan for sexual and reproductive health: towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Europe – leaving no one behind** (*WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2016*) has been adopted by the Member States of the WHO European Region and is intended to accelerate progress towards improving sexual and reproductive health in line with Health 2020 and the Minsk Declaration. The Action Plan focuses on priority action areas and interventions to help Member States achieve the full potential for sexual and reproductive health and well-being for all people. In the Action Plan, formal and informal evidence-informed comprehensive sexuality education is identified as a key priority, including the development and introduction of competency training for sexuality educators (objective 1.2).
- **Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** (*United Nations, 2015*). By adopting this global plan of action, the international community agreed to work towards 17 main goals and 169 targets related to economic, social and environmental sustainability in the period to 2030. The 2030 Agenda recognizes the interlinkages between the different goals and the need for an intersectoral and holistic response to
- socially inclusive development. A number of goals and targets refer to health, well-being, education and gender equality. While SDG 4 aims to ensure inclusive and equitable high-quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, Goal 4.c explicitly calls for an increase in the number of qualified teachers who undergo training programmes.
- **The Minsk Declaration: the life-course approach in the context of Health 2020** (*WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2015a*). The Declaration builds upon a life-course approach to health and well-being which acknowledges the interaction of multiple promotive, protective and risk factors throughout people's lives and adopts a temporal and societal perspective on the health of individuals and generations. A particular feature of the Declaration is the call for action to promote sexual and reproductive health, with a focus on access to information, sexuality education and youth-friendly services.
- **Investing in children: the European child and adolescent health strategy 2015–2020** (*WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2015b*). The strategy reflects the moral and legal obligation to protect and promote the rights of children and adolescents. It adopts a rights-based and life-course approach and aims to enable children and adolescents in the WHO European Region to realize their full potential for health, development and well-being and reduce their burden of avoidable disease and mortality. It explicitly calls for access to age-appropriate and gender-appropriate health and sexuality information for children and adolescents.
- **Health 2020 – a European policy framework supporting action across government and society for health and well-being** (*WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2013*). This policy framework for health and well-being in the WHO European Region advocates tackling inequalities, acting intersectorally, enabling more representative participation and adopting

a life-course approach to health. The life-course approach recognizes that health and illnesses in adulthood, including those related

to sexuality, are often rooted in health and experiences at previous stages of the life-course.

## Why a framework for core competencies? Background and rationale

### Main messages of this section:

- Recent developments have challenged the way children and young people are being raised and educated
- As important reference persons in the lives of children and young people, educators need to develop certain competencies which enable them to react to these developments in a professional way
- Training opportunities for sexuality educators differ widely within the WHO European Region and no comprehensive overview of competencies for sexuality educators has so far been formulated for the Region

Increasing globalization of knowledge, information and services, new mobility options and requirements, social media and constantly evolving information and communication technologies (ICT) have reshaped our living environment and made life more complex in various ways.

Knowledge has been digitized, and individuals can access almost any content available on the internet – regardless of their age or developmental stage. At the same time, new concepts of childhood and children’s needs and rights have challenged traditional ways of raising and educating children. The mastering of “life skills” is increasingly being emphasized as a learning objective in various learning environments, for instance in kindergartens and schools.

These changing roles and the competencies required of both parents and educators, who need to adapt to these new circumstances, are the subject of much debate. In this document, the focus will be on educators and the competencies they should have or acquire to conduct high-quality education.

A generation ago, educators could be confident that what they taught would serve their learners for life. A fixed syllabus was standard in most countries. Today, educators are confronted with constant expectations of change; they are supposed to enable children and young people to become lifelong learners, to evaluate easily accessible and often controversial information, to manage complex ways of thinking, and to be prepared to live and work in a rapidly changing world.

A special challenge for many educators who are charged with guiding learners as they grow up has been the question of how to educate them about sexual and reproductive health and rights, sexuality and relationships.

At present, the scope and quality of the training of sexuality educators varies widely from one country to another, and no comprehensive overview of competencies for sexuality educators has been formulated for the WHO European Region. With this publication, the authors aim to close that gap.

The previously published Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe (hereinafter referred to as the Standards) and the Guidance for Implementation (hereinafter referred to as the Guidance) address many of the questions: how formal sexuality education is beneficial for learners' sexual health and overall well-being, what the children and young people are supposed to learn at which age, and which steps should be followed in the implementation of sexuality education programmes.

There is clear evidence that sexuality education, as described in the Standards, has a positive impact on the sexual and reproductive health and well-being of children and young people (see, among others, *Bachus et al., 2010; Bucx et al., 2014; Haldre et al., 2012; Parry and Wilentz, 2015; Part et al., 2008; UNESCO, 2015a; Van Keulen et al., 2015*). However, the question of how to educate learners in this subject, including the kind of competencies a sexuality educator should possess, remains a matter for debate.

As a follow-up to the previous publications developed by BZgA, the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the European Expert Group on Sexuality Education, namely the Standards and the Guidance, this framework is based on the understanding that sexuality is a positive resource and a central aspect of being human throughout life.

In a working definition by WHO, it is further elaborated, as follows.

*"[Sexuality] 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)

This definition states clearly that sexuality is understood in a very broad sense and includes both physical aspects and others, such as emotions, relationships, gender identities and sexual orientation.

This very comprehensive approach is also used in WHO's working definition of sexual health, which is:

*"...a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled."* (WHO, 2006)

Following WHO's working definitions of sexuality and sexual health, the holistic approach to sexuality education was defined in the Standards as follows.

*"Sexuality education means learning about the cognitive, emotional, social, interactive and physical aspects of sexuality. Sexuality education starts early in childhood and progresses through adolescence and adulthood. For children and young people, it aims at supporting and protecting sexual development. It gradually equips and empowers children and young people with information, skills and positive values to understand and enjoy their sexuality, have safe and fulfilling relationships and take responsibility for their own and other people's sexual health and well-being. It enables them to make choices which enhance the quality of their lives and contribute to a compassionate and just society. All children and adolescents have the right to have access to age-appropriate sexuality education."* (WHO Regional Office for Europe and BZgA, 2010, p. 20)

As described here, the understanding of sexuality education in this publication is based upon a comprehensive and holistic,<sup>2</sup> rights-based and age- and development-appropriate

approach and includes the acquisition of knowledge, skills and positive and respectful attitudes.

## How do educators influence the development of children and young people?

### Main messages of this section:

- Educators play a crucial role in both education and socialization of children and young people, alongside parents and peers
- Educators' impact on learners goes much further than “just” learning outcomes
- Children and young people are active agents in their own socialization and in interaction with educators

In addition to individual factors, the development of children and young people depends to a great degree on their social and physical environment and their relationships with others. Important influences are, for instance, family members, peers and the media.

The present framework focuses on educators, because they are regarded as another crucial pillar in the development of children and young people (socialization) and are seen as trusted and valuable resources in educating them about sexual and reproductive health and rights, sexuality and relationships (education).

While the term “education” focuses more on deliberate interactions between educators and children, “socialization” includes all stimuli in all

dimensions, including feelings, knowledge, motives and capacity-building, regardless of whether these stimuli are deliberate or unintended (*Hurrelmann, 2006*). Socialization is understood here as the process in which children and young people become part of the social environment in which they live. In modern child sociology, the child is no longer seen as a passive object, but rather as an active agent in his or her own socialization, in interaction with other people (*James, 2013*).

Learning environments, in which education and socialization take place, can have a fundamental impact on the current and future development, health and well-being of children and young people (see *Cregan and Cuthbert, 2014; Hurrelmann, 2006; Jensen et al., 2013; Wyness, 2011*). It is widely recognized today that educators play a crucial role in the school-based and personal achievements of children and young people. Some even argue that the quality of educators is one of the most influential school-based factors affecting the accomplishments of learners (see *Bourgonje and Tromp, 2011*;

<sup>2</sup> In the Standards, holistic sexuality education was described as the third approach, following abstinence-only and abstinence-plus (considered comprehensive at that time) sexuality education. In the intervening years, the concept of comprehensive sexuality education has been further developed, and now resembles the holistic approach in the most crucial aspects.

*Vidovic and Domovic, 2013*). Hence the impact of educators goes much further than “just” learning outcomes.

Since the education of children and young people has become more multifaceted, the quality of educators’ teaching skills and the general quality of educational institutions is being increasingly debated on a global level.

Among others, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the European Commission and other international organizations such as Education International and Oxfam have commissioned studies and published reports and action plans emphasizing the impact of educators on the learning outcomes and socialization of learners. These publications point out the overall need for well-trained and well-prepared educators who are able to provide today’s learners with the attitudes, skills and knowledge necessary to help them to develop into well-informed, healthy and responsible citizens.

The examples below illustrate the international discussion on the competencies and roles of educators.

- According to the **European Commission**, in a fast-changing world, it is vital to provide educators<sup>3</sup> with initial education of the highest quality (pre-service training) and to encourage those already practising to continue developing and extending their competencies throughout their working lives (in-service training) (*European Commission, 2013a*). In the course of the 2012 initiative Rethinking Education (*European Commission, 2012*), the European Commission invited Member States to revise and strengthen the professional profile of the teaching profes-

sions. Key actions would include reviewing the effectiveness and academic and pedagogical quality of the educator’s (initial) training, but also the recruitment and the selection of educators based on clearly defined competencies.

- **OECD** points to several changes and challenges that educators face, such as: increasingly multicultural classrooms, a greater emphasis on integrating learners with special (learning) needs and the need to make more effective use of information and communication technologies, to engage more in planning within evaluation and accountability frameworks, and to involve parents more in school life (*OECD, 2009*). These changes and challenges have profound implications for the training of educators and the competencies they should acquire therein (*Schleicher, 2012*).
- The **UNESCO Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action** reaffirmed the vision of the worldwide movement for Education for All initiated in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 and reiterated in Dakar, Senegal in 2000. It aims to ensure inclusive, equitable, quality education and lifelong learning for all. Quality education requires educators who are empowered, efficiently recruited, well-trained, professionally qualified, motivated and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems (*UNESCO et al., 2015*).
- **Education International<sup>4</sup> and Oxfam** have concentrated on the rights-based approach to education, according to which each child has the right to high-quality education and high-quality educators (based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child), whether in formal or non-formal education settings.

<sup>3</sup> The work of the European Commission focused on teachers in school settings. But since teachers are an important subgroup of the educators addressed by the present publication, all the results are relevant and have been included, even though the framework is aimed at educators in general.

<sup>4</sup> Education International is the largest federation of unions of educational workers in the world, representing about 330 unions and more than 30 million teachers.

Quality educators are key in the provision of quality education. This requires investment in initial and in-service educator training and professional development. While the importance

of educator training is acknowledged, support structures are seen as crucial for the quality of education as well (*Bourgonje and Tromp, 2011*).

## Why should educators be trained for sexuality education?

### Main messages of this section:

- Training of sexuality educators is one of the key factors influencing the quality of sexuality education programmes
- Sexuality education differs from other topic areas in different ways. These differences make specific training for educators in this area especially crucial
- Learners and sexuality educators themselves demand quality training of sexuality educators
- In addition to training, sexuality educators need a supportive environment in order to deliver sexuality education in an effective, enabling and inclusive way

The points made above underscore the importance of, and the need for, continuous training of educators before and throughout their working life. It is apparent that training supports educators in meeting the complex demands of society and the educational system by mobilizing their own psychosocial resources, by empowering them to act professionally and appropriately in different situations, and by helping them to undertake their tasks effectively and efficiently (*European Commission, 2013b; Timmermann, 2009*).

These general observations become even more crucial when applied to sexuality education. Sexuality education differs from other topic areas in several ways. These differences influence the role of sexuality educators as well as the requirements they have to meet.

- Sexuality education can support learners in their overall development throughout the life-course. Sexuality education can contribute to healthy (sexual) lifestyles, mutually respectful relationships and general well-being, as well as to the prevention of (sexual) violence, unintended pregnancies or infection with HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (*see, among others, Hirst, 2013; Parry and Wilentz, 2015; UNESCO, 2009 and 2015a*). Sexuality educators need to develop an understanding of these different dimensions and reflect upon their own contributions to them.
- Sexuality education is not only about learning facts, but also about developing life skills and positive attitudes towards sexuality. Learners should be empowered to take independent

decisions regarding their own sexuality in all forms and at all levels – biological, emotional, psychological, legal, social and ethical (*see, among others, AEES, 2014; Helmer et al., 2015; Hirst, 2013; UNESCO, 2015a; Van de Bongardt et al., 2013*). Sexuality educators are crucial for facilitating these processes.

- Classrooms and other settings are becoming more and more diverse in terms of learners' backgrounds and abilities. For instance, the number of young people with a migration background has increased over recent decades. Research indicates that young people with a migration background often have less knowledge of sexual and reproductive health and rights than their native peers (*Bode and Hefßling, 2015*), depending on the kind and extent of information provided in their country of origin. Sexuality educators need to adapt the content of sexuality education to learners' different needs, abilities, questions and life situations (*see, among others, AEES, 2014; Barr et al., 2014; Parry and Wilentz, 2015; Van de Bongardt et al., 2013*).
- The topics that are discussed in sexuality education are sensitive, sometimes even taboo, and often related to individual attitudes and values as well as to societal norms. The topics addressed can include, for instance: socioemotional aspects of sexuality, sexual pleasure, sexual orientation and gender identities, gender roles, sexual risks and safety and sexual rights. In the course of discussion, both learners and educators may be confronted with contrasting attitudes and values and by potential personal vulnerabilities. Sexuality educators need to be prepared to have an open dialogue with learners and to explore and reconcile different viewpoints in a safe and enabling environment (*see, among others, Barr et al., 2014; IPPF, 2010; Mehmedovic and Cvjetkovic, 2016; UNESCO, 2009 and 2014*).
- Learners are able to gain information on sexual and reproductive health and rights, sexuality and relationships by themselves, through various sources such as peers, family members and different media channels – including social media (*Bode and Hefßling, 2015; Van de Bongardt et al., 2013*). The quality and degree of correctness of the information they receive through these channels varies widely. Many children and young people can access and share any available content, especially through social media and ICT, including pornographic content, for instance. Sexuality educators can support children and young people in sorting out and processing this vast amount of information, putting the content into its proper context and differentiating between correct, reliable information and misleading information.
- Sexuality educators themselves are part of society and are therefore influenced by the culture and the educational and political system in which they live and work. This society, together with individual factors and their personal experiences, including their own culture and traditions, has formed their personal attitudes, beliefs and values regarding sexuality and relationships. All this may influence the personal willingness and readiness and the ability of educators to deliver sexuality education and content (*see also UNESCO, 2010*). This becomes even more true with increasingly multicultural classrooms (*see, among others, Parry and Wilentz, 2015; UNESCO, 2010; Van de Bongardt et al., 2013*). Sexuality educators therefore need to be prepared to reflect upon their own experiences and attitudes in relation to sexuality and relationships.

- Many countries debate at different levels about whether, how, what and when children and young people should learn about sexuality and relationships. This can lead to challenges for sexuality educators which their colleagues who work in other subject areas may not face. Restrictive policies or concerns among parents or other members of the community are examples of these challenges (see, among others, Barr et al., 2014; UNESCO, 2015a). Sexuality educators therefore need to be prepared to deal constructively with potential criticisms and constraints.

Researchers, practitioners and other experts working in the field acknowledge both pre- and in-service training as one of the key factors determining the quality of sexuality education. Hence, training of sexuality educators is one of the crucial “levers of success” of quality sexuality

education programmes and projects (UNESCO, 2010). Without knowledgeable and skilled sexuality educators, who can facilitate open, respectful and non-judgemental discussions with learners and are able to employ participatory approaches and new learning methods, even the best curriculum will have little impact (see AEES, 2014; Barr et al., 2014; IPPF, 2010; Kirby et al., 2006; Parry and Wilentz, 2015; SIECCAN, 2010; UNESCO, 2009, 2010, 2014, 2015a).

Through training, sexuality educators can acquire the various competencies they need to deliver high-quality sexuality education. Training can also help them to reflect upon the special characteristics of sexuality education, as outlined above, and to reach a profound understanding of their own role and their responsibilities in their profession.

### Supportive environment

In order to be able to deliver sexuality education in an effective, enabling and inclusive way, sexuality educators themselves need a supportive environment. Besides training, this comprises support structures on different levels, including the following:

- Policies and laws on the way sexuality education is embedded in the learning environment – for instance: Is sexuality education made mandatory by law and is it firmly anchored in the curriculum?
- Society as a whole, including colleagues and parents – for instance: Is sexuality education valued in society and regarded as an important element contributing to the (sexual) development, health and well-being of children and young people?
- Regional support services (e.g. health services and counselling centres) and infrastructure for networking – for instance: Are there other experts or institutions which could be involved in sexuality education?
- Supportive own institution, including managing staff and head of the institution – for instance: How does the institution advocate for the delivery of quality sexuality education and support educators when they encounter opposition?
- On-site infrastructure, facilities and materials to conduct sexuality education and projects – for instance: Are there varied and adequate equipment, extra rooms, specific materials, etc.?

### The need for training: expressed by sexuality educators themselves ...

Sexuality educators reported on their personal challenges and unmet needs in relation to their profession and on their expectations of themselves as sexuality educators. Many educators fully recognize the importance of training, where these issues can be addressed. However, at the same time, they say that the training they undergo is inadequate and that they lack institutional support (*see, among others, Brenn and Prantner, 2000; Byers, 2011; Depauli et al., 2016; Goldman and Coleman, 2013; Mehmedovic and Cvjetkovic, 2016; Sex Education Forum 2010, Van de Bongardt et al., 2013; Vorobjov et al., 2011*).

**Expectations:** Educators report that they expect themselves to be able to react flexibly to the various needs of learners, to be aware of the influence of social media and ICT on learners' attitudes and behaviour and to be sensitive to gender differences and their implications for sexuality education. They also report that they wish to increase their own knowledge of sociocultural aspects of sexuality, for example body image, cultural and religious diversity and sexual risk factors associated with certain groups. Moreover, educators stated their interest in topics that are often controversial at a societal level, such as sexual orientation and sexual identity, masturbation and the role of virginity in different cultures. Another topic of interest mentioned is the prevention of sexual abuse (*see, among others, Depauli et al., 2016; Mehmedovic and Cvjetkovic, 2016; Van de Bongardt et al., 2013; Vorobjov et al., 2011*).

**Personal challenges:** Educators refer to concerns about personal anxiety and resistance, which could be addressed in professional training. Sexuality educators are afraid, for instance, that they will violate social and cultural taboos when educating

learners about sexual and reproductive health and rights, sexuality and relationships, that they will offend parents, or that they will be accused of encouraging promiscuity and "loose" moral behaviour in learners.

The resistance concerns that educators mention, on the other hand, refer to the educators themselves and the question whether sexuality education is part of their work at all, since they may originally have been trained in other areas. They report feeling uncomfortable and insecure and avoiding sensitive issues related to sexual and reproductive health and rights, sexuality and relationships (*see, among others, Mehmedovic and Cvjetkovic, 2016; Parry and Wilentz, 2015; UNESCO, 2014; Van de Bongardt et al., 2013*).

**Unmet needs:** Sexuality educators state that they are in need of specific skills to create a safe environment in the classroom, to lead discussions on sexuality-related issues using appropriate language, to listen actively to learners and to deal with learners' personal questions and experiences. Questions arise especially in the context of multicultural classrooms. Educators further express the need for teaching materials, background/in-depth information on specific topic areas and the availability and involvement of external professionals and non-governmental organizations in delivering high-quality sexuality education (*see, among others, Depauli et al., 2016; Mehmedovic and Cvjetkovic, 2016; Van de Bongardt et al., 2013*).

Overall, studies show that training can make sexuality educators feel more comfortable discussing sexual issues with learners and more convinced that their comprehensive and holistic approach to sexuality education is legitimate (*see, among others, Brenn and Prantner, 2000; Mehmedovic and Cvjetkovic, 2016; Wight and Buston, 2003*).

### ... and by learners

In general, young people themselves are increasingly demanding their right to sexuality education (UNESCO, 2015a). In various research studies, learners reported that parents, peers and educators in school are the most important resource persons for them, followed by professionals working in other fields (for instance doctors or counsellors) (Bode and Hefßling, 2015; Byers, 2011; Ekstrand et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2016; Markenzius et al., 2009).

Depending on their individual and societal context, young people are interested in various areas of sexual and reproductive health and rights, sexuality and relationships, and want less of a focus on and repetition of the biological aspects. Examples of topics that are considered important and interesting are: the prevention of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, contraception methods, sexual initiative-taking and sexual practices, sexual orientation, gender diversity and the prevention of sexual violence (see, among others, Allen, 2008; Bode and Hefßling, 2015; de Matos et al., 2014; Ekstrand et al., 2011; Helmer et al., 2015; Johnson et al., 2016; Kontula, 2014; Markenzius et al., 2009; Parry and Wilentz, 2015; Santos et al., 2012; UNESCO, 2015a).

Learners also express their desire for sexuality educators to be more knowledgeable and with more

expertise for delivering sensitive subjects such as sexuality education. They should be open-minded, respectful and feel comfortable with the topics addressed, and should allow topics to evolve following learners' needs (Ekstrand et al., 2011; Helmer et al., 2015; Johnson et al., 2016; Pound et al., 2016). Sex Education Forum UK describes "trained educators" as a key feature of quality sexuality education. They further state that it "needs to be taught by willing and competent teachers. Young people have said SRE [sex and relationship education] is best when teachers are confident, unembarrassed and able to teach correct biological facts and also explore relationships issues" (Sex Education Forum, 2010:3).

From the viewpoint of learners, sexuality education has to be delivered using various learning methods (including active learning methods), i.e. not so much by lectures, and it needs to start earlier and be repeated at intervals throughout institutional education, at different developmental stages of the learner and with a greater emphasis on sexual diversity. Educators should give space for questions and give information on various topics related to sexual and reproductive health and rights, sexuality and relationships (see, for instance, Bode and Hefßling 2015; Depauli et al., 2016; Ekstrand et al., 2011; Helmer et al., 2015; Johnson et al., 2016; Kull, 2003; Mehmedovic and Cvjetkovic, 2016; Pound et al., 2016).

# What are the general competencies of educators?

## Main messages of this section:

- How competencies are defined and what they entail differs depending on the country and the field of education
- In this document, competencies are understood as a complex action system encompassing three different and interrelated components: attitudes, skills and knowledge
- Each component is described by different aspects which are crucial for the delivery of high-quality education

Over recent decades, many different definitions, theoretical approaches and concepts of competencies have been developed. Many, sometimes contradictory, terms and concepts are currently in use in the WHO European Region, depending on the country and the field of education or discipline.

Some define competencies as a multidimensional and holistic concept that combines different forms of knowledge, skills and social and personal qualities. Others are concerned less with the overall capacity of the individual and more with the individual performance of specific tasks or skills, which are often defined in standards (Bourgonje and Tromp, 2011; Gordon et al., 2009; Weinert, 2001).

In order to describe the various competencies sexuality educators should possess or develop in the course of training, it is crucial to be orientated towards a holistic definition of competencies. Rychen (2004) proposes the following holistic definition by relating competencies to demands, individual attributes and context:

*“A competence is defined as the ability to meet a complex demand. Each competence corresponds to a combination of interrelated cognitive and practical skills, knowledge and personal qualities such as motivation, values and ethics, attitudes and emotions. These components are mobilized*

*together for effective action in a particular context.” (Rychen, 2004:321; see also Weinert, 2001).*

In accordance with the above definition and ongoing international discussions, in the present framework competencies are understood as overarching complex action systems and described by breaking them down into many aspects within the three components: attitudes, skills and knowledge (based on Bourgonje and Tromp, 2011; European Commission, 2013a; McDiarmid and Clevenger-Bright, 2008, cited in Caena, 2011; Vidovic and Domovic, 2013).

Below we present an overview of various general competencies of educators that are being discussed in international literature, for instance by the European Commission, Education International and Oxfam, or WHO (see, among others, Barry et al., 2012; Bourgonje and Tromp, 2011; Caena, 2011; European Commission, 2013b; McDiarmid and Clevenger-Bright, 2008; WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2014). These competencies are understood to be the prerequisites for quality education in any subject area and serve as a basis for all further discussions. They are not repeated in the section on specific competencies recommended for sexuality education, but should be kept in mind as general requirements for the professional performance of all educators.

## General attitudes:

### Educators should

- Enjoy working with children and young people and appreciate them as active contributors to societal development
- Be committed to education and to professional development through ongoing learning and studying
- Be ready to question, examine and review their own teaching practices and their personal and professional conduct, for ongoing improvement and correction if required
- Appreciate diversity and multiculturalism, promote tolerance and cultivate respect for all people, regardless of colour, national, ethnic, social or religious background, sex, age, gender identity and sexual orientation
- Be sensitive to different backgrounds, needs and abilities of learners and to different dynamics in the classroom
- Be committed to treating all learners with dignity and respect and to promoting human rights and gender equality

## General skills:

### Educators should

- Create a safe, violence-free, inclusive and enabling learning environment and promote learning by all learners regardless of their background
- Plan, manage and coordinate teaching in a way that accommodates diverse needs and abilities of learners, using relevant age- and development-appropriate strategies, tools and materials, including specific projects or lessons
- Reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons, use relevant data and evidence to monitor learners' progress and adapt teaching and learning objectives and processes, strategies and tools accordingly
- Manage individual learners, groups and classes effectively, by setting clear rules and expectations for behaviour and using positive approaches in order to engage learners in lessons, involve them in their education and motivate them for learning and participation
- Recognize causes for concern in learners' behaviour, studies and social and personal life and offer support; intervene immediately in cases of violence and other threats to health and general well-being of learners
- Collaborate and maintain good working relationships with learners, their parents and colleagues (other educators); negotiate and resolve disputes and conflicts, if needed
- Be flexible and adapt to multilevel dynamics with cross-influences coming from society, the local community, sector-wide and school-specific education policies, classroom and school dynamics; maintain integrity and high standards of personal and professional conduct

## General knowledge:

### Educators should know

- The relevant subject and curriculum areas and their development
- Formal and informal evaluation and assessment procedures and methods in order to evaluate the progress made by learners
- Contextual, institutional and organizational aspects of educational policies
- The physical, social and intellectual development of children and adolescents, including developmental psychology
- Learning theories, pedagogical principles and strategies
- Group processes and dynamics, different educational technologies, including ICT and media
- How to adapt teaching to support education of learners with different abilities (for instance those with special educational needs)

## Part 2: Competencies of sexuality educators

In this document, we use a holistic concept of competencies (*see Rychen, 2004*). A competency is understood as the ability to meet a complex demand: in our case, to educate learners about various aspects of sexual and reproductive health and rights, sexuality and relationships.

This chapter presents different components of the interrelated competencies sexuality educators should possess in order to conduct sexuality education – namely attitudes, skills and knowledge (Fig. 1). These components influence each other considerably and cannot, therefore, be regarded as independent of one another. Knowledge about

different aspects of sexuality can, for example, influence certain attitudes of sexuality educators, but, on the other hand, personal attitudes can also influence the kind of knowledge a sexuality educator is willing to acquire. Also, the skills sexuality educators acquire may be influenced by the sort of knowledge they gain (which in turn can depend on their attitudes), and vice versa.

Fig. 1 outlines this interrelationship and shows that, although each component can be considered independently, all components affect each other. A clear distinction is therefore not always possible.

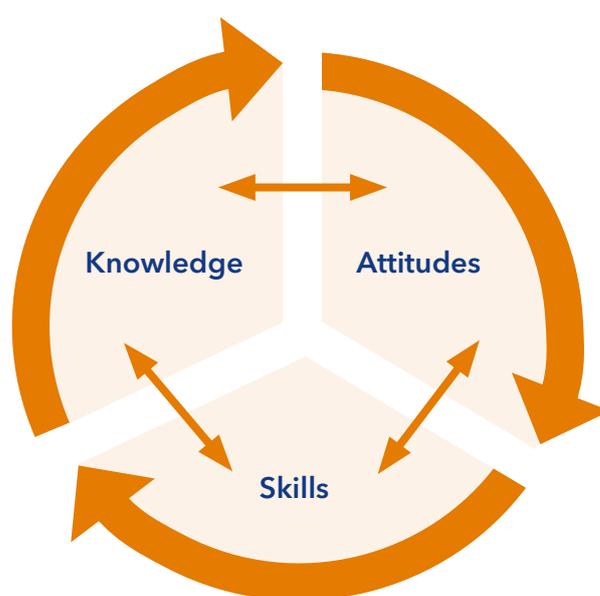


Fig. 1. Interrelationship of attitudes, skills and knowledge

The following overview of competencies (summarized in Fig. 2) is relevant for various professional groups working in sexuality education, whether they reach out to learners in an official/formal setting or an informal setting. While all sexuality

educators should ideally have all these competencies, they may need some of them more than others. This is highly dependent on the needs and abilities of the learners, which derive, for instance, from their age and developmental status.

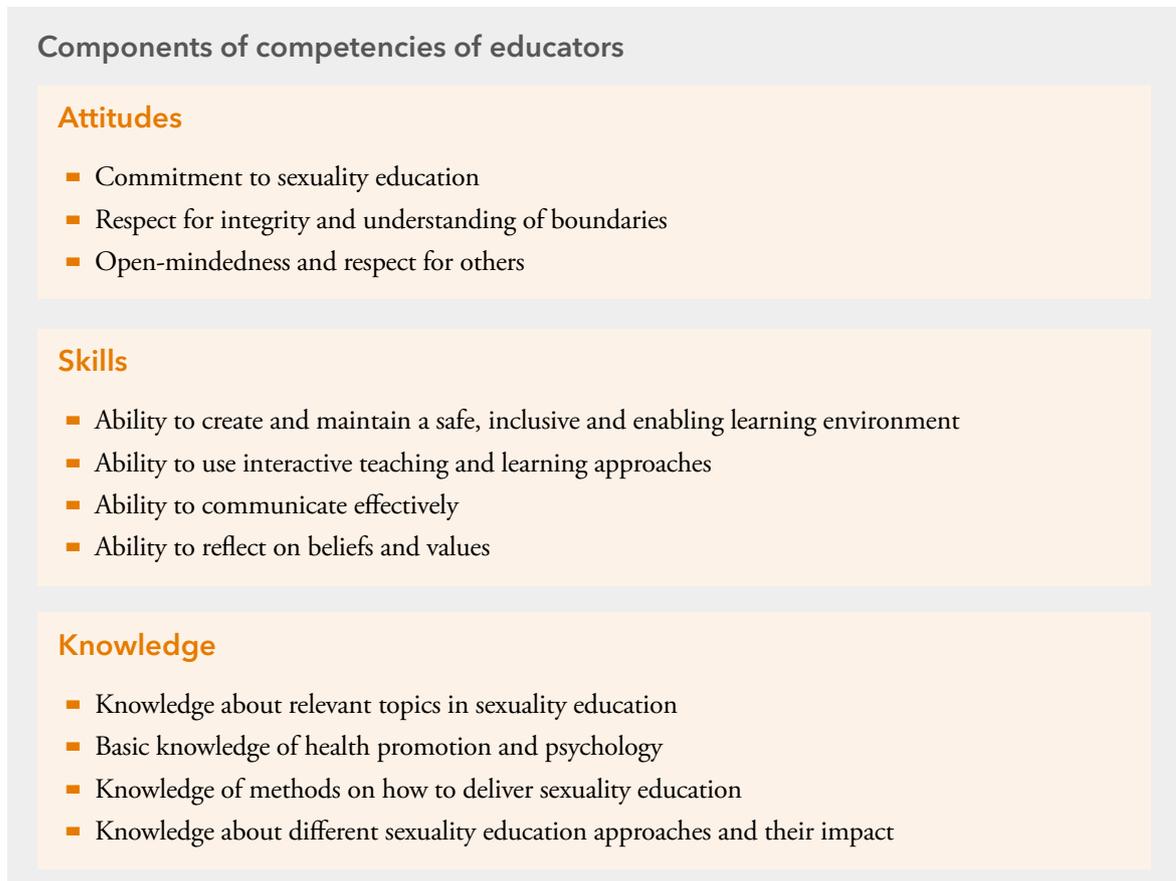


Fig. 2. Overview of the components of competencies of educators for delivering holistic sexuality education

# Attitudes

Attitudes (see Fig. 3) are understood as a key factor influencing and guiding personal behaviour. Attitudes can be implicit (and thus automatic and unconscious) or explicit (and thus conscious and controlled).

A personal attitude is very much linked to both personal and societal norms and values and can include:

- Thoughts, beliefs and ideas (cognitive component)
- Feelings, emotions and reactions to these (affective component)
- The tendency or disposition to act in a certain way (behavioural component)

The personal attitude of an educator is an important factor for delivering high-quality education. Attitudes of educators shape the learning environment and influence learners' motivation and achievement. Furthermore, attitudes of educators are very

much linked with their strategies for coping with the challenges of professional life (*OECD, 2009*).

Sexuality education is a field that deals with sensitive issues and, depending on prevailing norms and values, also with persisting taboos. It is very closely connected with the personal life of the people involved in sexuality education (educators as well as learners). It is therefore important for sexuality educators to be aware of their own attitudes, norms and values related to sexuality, and to understand how these affect them in their working lives, especially in their conscious and unconscious behaviour towards learners.

Attitudes that are especially important for sexuality educators are:

- Commitment to sexuality education
- Respect for integrity and understanding of boundaries
- Open-mindedness and respect for others

## Commitment to sexuality education

### Sexuality educators should

- Be willing and motivated to teach sexuality education
- Be committed to the principles of comprehensive and holistic sexuality education<sup>1</sup>
- Be convinced that comprehensive and holistic sexuality education has a positive impact on the (sexual) health and well-being of learners
- Be prepared to examine and challenge harmful sexual and gender norms and practices, injustices and vulnerabilities
- Be willing to challenge personal opinions, norms and feelings related to topics in sexuality, different cultural and religious backgrounds, abilities, gender identities and sexual orientation of learners, their parents and colleagues (other educators)
- Be aware that own experiences, attitudes and behaviour influence the way of educating learners
- Be responsive to parents' concerns about sexuality education and be prepared to address them with respect and by reasoning with evidence-based information

<sup>1</sup> Cf Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe (WHO Regional Office for Europe and BZgA, 2010).

Fig. 3. Attitudes

## Respect for integrity and understanding of boundaries

### Sexuality educators should

- Respect privacy and the physical, psychological and sexual integrity of oneself and others (learners, parents, colleagues)
- Refrain from disclosing information about the sexuality of learners
- Refrain from sharing personal information about own sexuality
- Be willing to reflect on and understand personal and other people's situations, feelings, beliefs, attitudes and values (including own biases and personal opinions) regarding sexuality and relationships
- Be aware of and accept own boundaries and limitations and be willing to refer to other professionals
- Be committed to treating all persons, regardless of their different backgrounds, abilities, gender identities and sexual orientation, with respect and dignity
- Demonstrate zero tolerance of sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination and be prepared to protect learners from it

## Open-mindedness and respect for others

### Sexuality educators should

- Regard sexuality as a positive potential of all individuals
- Demonstrate a positive attitude and respect towards sexuality in children, young people and adults, according to their age and development level
- Be willing to leave children and young people their freedom and the social space they need to develop their sexuality according to their age and development level
- Be open about different backgrounds, abilities, gender identities and sexual orientation
- Demonstrate an understanding for societal, cultural, religious, familial and individual factors influencing sexual behaviours and other expressions of sexuality
- Demonstrate understanding of and respect for human rights that apply to learners, their parents and colleagues, including sexual and reproductive rights as stipulated in relevant policies, conventions and declarations
- Understand and respect the many different perspectives relating to sexual choices, behaviours and expression
- respect and create awareness of social responsibility and promote tolerance

Fig. 3. Attitudes - continued

## Skills

Skills are understood as abilities educators can acquire that enable them to conduct high-quality education. Skills can be taught, modified and further developed. Educators can use a wide range of skills in different dimensions.

- To facilitate learning by learners at different levels
  - By educating learners about facts in different subject areas, educators can facilitate the acquisition of knowledge (basic thinking skills)
  - By enabling thinking processes within learners which require cognitive processing, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, reasoning and analysing, interpreting and synthesizing information (higher-order thinking skills<sup>5</sup>), educators support learners in making use of the knowledge they have gained, applying it to new situations and coping with situations of internal and external stress and demands<sup>6</sup>
  - By supporting learners in thinking about their own thinking, educators support them in planning, monitoring and assessing their own understanding and own performance (metacognition<sup>7</sup>)

<sup>5</sup> For the concept of higher-order thinking skills see, for example, Brookhart, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> For the concepts of stress and coping see, for example, Folkman and Lazarus, 1988 and Zimbardo and Gerrig, 2007.

<sup>7</sup> For the concept of metacognition see, for example, Baker, 2010.

- To handle different situations and challenges as educators, for instance to arrange their own learning and preparation processes or to cope with stress within educational settings
- To deal with professional requirements in the work domain, such as time management, leadership, networking, cooperation with other institutions

While in some subjects the aim is often primarily that learners should acquire new knowledge and facts, the aim of sexuality education goes far beyond this. Sexuality education aims to equip learners with information, skills and positive values so that they can understand and enjoy their sexuality, have safe and fulfilling relationships and take responsibility for their own and other people's sexual health and well-being. In order to achieve this aim, sexuality educators need to make use of different skills in all the dimensions mentioned above.

Skills (see Fig. 4) that are especially important for sexuality educators are:

- Creating and maintaining a safe, inclusive and enabling learning environment
- Using interactive teaching and learning approaches
- Communicating effectively
- Reflecting on beliefs and values

## Ability to create and maintain a safe, inclusive and enabling learning environment

### Sexuality educators should

- Be able to create and maintain a safe, inclusive and enabling learning environment so that all learners of different cultural and religious backgrounds, abilities, gender identities and sexual orientations feel protected, included and empowered to participate
- Be able to use sexuality education to promote and reinforce health-promoting-school policies (including prevention of sexual and gender-based violence)
- Be vigilant for early symptoms, markers or signs of aggressive behaviour, sexual and gender-based violence and abuse among learners and colleagues and respond adequately
- Be able to establish rules about respect, confidentiality and questions

## Ability to use interactive teaching and learning approaches

### Sexuality educators should

- Be able to use a wide range of interactive and participatory student-centred approaches<sup>1</sup> and tools<sup>2</sup> to help learners stay engaged, acquire knowledge, stimulate reflection and communication and develop skills necessary for building healthy relationships and making informed decisions
- Be able to search and assess existing materials and methods in order to identify evidence-informed, age- and development-appropriate materials and effective methods

## Ability to communicate effectively

### Sexuality educators should

- Be able to communicate with confidence and in a non-judgemental way
- Be able to use appropriate language that is understood by the learners, that feels comfortable and takes into account different cultural and religious backgrounds, abilities, gender identities and sexual orientations
- Be able to discuss openly various sexuality-related topics and issues with learners in an age-appropriate and development-appropriate, culturally sensitive and multiperspective way
- Be able to refrain from imposing personal views, beliefs and assumptions on learners
- Be able to analyse and critically discuss social and cultural contexts and factors that influence sexuality and sexual behaviour of learners
- Be able to communicate effectively with learners and their parents on complex and controversial topics related to sexuality in a professional and non-judgemental way
- Be able to respond appropriately to provocative questions and statements

<sup>1</sup> Student-centred approaches include, for example: short lectures, paired, small-group and whole-group discussions, listening and reporting back, brainstorming, quizzes, contests, storytelling and role-play, problem-solving and simulation activities, field trips, research projects, surveys.

<sup>2</sup> Tools include, for example: storyboards, situation cards, case studies, video tutorials, documentaries, materials for demonstrations, internet resources.

Fig. 4. Skills

## Ability to reflect on beliefs and values

### Sexuality educators should

- Be able to reflect critically and constructively on and understand personal feelings, beliefs, experiences, attitudes and values (including biases and prejudices) regarding sexuality and relationships
- Be able to reflect on and better understand others' feelings, beliefs, attitudes and values regarding sexuality and relationships
- Be able to reflect on what is understood as “normal” by learners and in the wider society (e.g. body image, gender roles)
- Be able to support learners in developing critical thinking (for example in differentiating between reliable and unreliable sources of information)

Fig. 4. Skills - continued

## Knowledge

In this document, knowledge (see Fig. 5) is understood as professional knowledge in all relevant areas, which is required to deliver high-quality education. This includes:<sup>8</sup>

- Knowledge of the general principles of teaching (pedagogical knowledge)
- Knowledge of the subject matter (content knowledge)
- Knowledge that enables educators to impart the subject matter to the learners and thereby to make the content accessible to them (pedagogical subject knowledge)

Pedagogical knowledge is the basis for the work of all educators, no matter which subject they teach. This general knowledge includes aspects such as rules and strategies for classroom management and organization of knowledge. In line with the purpose of this document, the following section focuses primarily on the content and pedagogical subject knowledge of sexuality educators.

Sexuality educators have, among others, the task of supplying learners with evidence-based informa-

tion on sexual and reproductive health and rights, sexuality and relationships. Having knowledge of the content of sexuality education classes and projects is a prerequisite for the fulfilment of this task. The Standards provide a comprehensive overview of the topics that should be approached, structured according to different age groups.

Sexuality educators may work in various settings and with various target groups. It is crucial that sexuality educators adapt their knowledge to the needs of the learners, for instance to their age or developmental stage. In turn, this means that a sexuality educator does not necessarily need to have knowledge about each and every subtopic.

Knowledge that is especially important for sexuality educators is:

- Knowledge about relevant topics in sexuality education
- Basic knowledge of health promotion and psychology
- Knowledge of ways of delivering sexuality education
- Knowledge about different sexuality education approaches and their impact

<sup>8</sup> Based on, for example Ball et al., 2008; Baumert and Kunter, 2006; Bromme, 1997; Kleickmann 2013; Shulman, 1986

### Knowledge about relevant topics in sexuality education (see the eight thematic categories of the *Standards*)<sup>1</sup>

- The human body and human development (e.g. all body parts, their function, different body types, age differences in bodies and their development)
- Fertility and reproduction (e.g. pregnancy, birth, menstrual cycle and development, impact of motherhood and fatherhood)
- Sexuality in general (e.g. emotion, feelings, physical aspects, enjoyment, pleasure, different sexual expressions and behaviour, sexuality at different ages, gender differences)
- Variety of emotions (e.g. different types of emotions, words for emotions, different kinds of love and differences between love, friendship, etc.)
- Relationships and different lifestyles (e.g. friendship, companionship, dating relationships, same-sex relationships; various forms of family relationships and their breakdown, maintaining relationships)
- Sexuality, health and well-being (e.g. how to build up awareness of own body; symptoms, risks and consequences of unsafe, unpleasant and unwanted sexual experiences; transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, prevention, treatment, care and support; risky sexual behaviour and its consequences, sexual abuse, positive influence of sexuality on health and well-being)
- Sexuality and rights (e.g. international sexual rights of children, national laws and regulations)
- Social and cultural determinants of sexuality (e.g. social, cultural and religious norms and values in different societies; influence of peer pressure, media, pornography, laws on sexual decisions, partnership and behaviour)

### Basic knowledge of health promotion and psychology

- Psychosexual development and theory of socialization of children and young people
- Learning styles and learning strategies of learners
- Communication and crisis intervention
- Behaviour development and/or change
- Concept of health literacy
- Models and good practice of sexual health promotion
- Determinants of sexual behaviour of learners (e.g. background, school environment, family, peers)
- Relevant support services, including referral systems, for learners and educators for information on sexuality and health

<sup>1</sup> For more details, see the sexuality education matrix in the *Standards*.

**Fig. 5. Knowledge**

### Knowledge of how to deliver sexuality education

- Interactive and participatory teaching methods appropriate for specific target groups (with different backgrounds and abilities) and learning objectives
- Knowledge of different quality materials, lesson packages and sources of information for educators
- Knowledge of how to organize, manage and conduct a project and lessons in sexuality education (e.g. coordinating different actors in a project, planning field trips)
- The language children and young people use in regard to sexuality
- Accurate terminology in different fields dealing with sexuality (e.g. psychology, medicine, sociology)
- Strategies and techniques to empower learners in media literacy, especially in respect of social media
- Online and offline information provided about sexuality used by learners (e.g. pornography and its messages, magazines, books)

### Knowledge about different sexuality education approaches and their impact

- Different concepts of sexuality education
- Quality criteria of programmes and methods in sexuality education
- Impact of holistic sexuality education on the sexual health and well-being of learners
- Positive impact of holistic sexuality education on societal development
- Resistance against sexuality education in society
- Barriers to the implementation and provision of sexuality education

Fig. 5. Knowledge - continued



# 3

## Part 3: Training of sexuality educators: examples of good practice across the WHO European Region

Training of sexuality educators can take place in many different ways, depending on the provider of the training, the extent and scope of the training and the methods used. It can, for example, be set up as pre- or in-service training, it can be face-to-face or via online tools, it can be conducted on a large scale or offered as a single course. The following examples will give an impression of the variety of training programmes which are being implemented within the WHO European Region.

These examples provide information about the main learning objectives of the training, the content

of the training and how it is set up. For further information, contact details will be provided when possible. Besides the good-practice examples in this publication, see also more information on the basic conditions for training of sexuality educators in the Guidance (*WHO Regional Office for Europe and BZgA, 2013*).

The good-practice examples were kindly provided by experts working in the field of sexuality education in the following countries: Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Switzerland and Ukraine.

## Belgium

<b>Title</b>	<b>Flag system: addressing sexual behaviour of children and young people Specialization also in vulnerable groups (disability and trauma)</b>
<b>Country</b>	Belgium / The Netherlands
<b>Institutions</b>	Nongovernmental organizations: Movisie, Rutgers, Sensoa
<b>Target group</b>	All professionals working with children and young people (e.g. school teachers, kindergarten teachers, counsellors, as well as professionals in residential youth care, psychiatric care settings, preschool services)
<b>Main learning objectives</b>	<p>For professionals working with children and young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To be able to understand and to adequately assess the sexual behaviour of children and young people</li> <li>■ To be able to talk about the behaviour, addressing all people involved</li> <li>■ To be able to (re)act in a pedagogically appropriate way</li> </ul> <p>For managers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To develop an understanding of how the organization can promote the sexual health of children and young people</li> <li>■ To be able to establish long-term interventions at different levels of the organization's policy</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	<p>Depending on their previous experience and professional background, people can choose between several options (to use the flag system, at least a one-day course is recommended):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ introduction (1/2 day)</li> <li>■ introduction + workshop (1 day)</li> <li>■ basic training (2 days)</li> <li>■ specialization (1 day)</li> <li>■ trajectory (can be two or more sessions a year)</li> </ul> <p>Training starts by collecting some difficult situations professionals might experience in relation to sexual behaviour of children or young people. These situations are discussed and trainers give an intuitive judgement and assessment of the situations (from acceptable to not acceptable).</p> <p>Afterwards, six criteria (consent, equality, free will, appropriate for age, appropriate for context, self-respect) are introduced that can be made use of to make the judgement of the situation more objective. Green, yellow, red or black colours are used to flag the particular situations described.</p> <p>Additional attention is paid to disability and trauma, and the influence on judgement and response. It is also possible to further investigate the issue</p>

on a structural level by discussing consequences for the organization's policy (touching, supervision, rules and agreements, communication, etc.).

The format can be an open course (individual participants) or “in-company training” (teams).

To acquire a licence as trainer, there are “training of trainers” courses several times a year, and a course on “teaching the flag system in training future professionals”.

### **Implementation**

The training programme was implemented in 2010 and has been firmly established since then. While it is strongly advised by the Government, the training is not mandatory for professionals. The fees of the training need to be covered by the participants.

Evaluations were performed in 2012 (usability) and 2014 (implementation) by the University of Ghent, as part of an investigation into implementation in residential care (Raak-Pro, Netherlands).

### **Further information**

#### **Related publications:**

- Frans E, Franck T (2010). Vlaggensysteem. Reageren op seksueel (grensoverschrijdend ) gedrag van kinderen en jongeren. [Flag system. Response to sexual (transgressive) behaviour in children and young people]. Antwerp: Sensoa/Garant.
- Frans E, De Wilde K, Janssens K, Van Berlo W, Storms O (2016). Buiten de lijnen. Sensoa vlaggensysteem voor kinderen en jongeren met bijzondere behoeften [Outside the lines. Sensoa flag system for children and youth with special needs]. Antwerp: Sensoa/Garant.

In 2017, Rutgers will support the international upscale of the Flag system. By the end of 2017, the website [www.flagsystem.org](http://www.flagsystem.org) should be operational. In the meantime, information in Dutch can be found at [www.vlaggensysteem.be](http://www.vlaggensysteem.be) (by Sensoa) and [www.vlaggensysteem.nl](http://www.vlaggensysteem.nl) (by Movisie).

#### **Contact details:**

Sensoa  
Erika Frans  
[Erika.frans@sensoa.be](mailto:Erika.frans@sensoa.be)

## Bosnia and Herzegovina

<b>Title</b>	<b>Adolescent health, sexual and reproductive health and healthy lifestyles</b>
<b>Country</b>	Bosnia and Herzegovina
<b>Institutions</b>	Nongovernmental organization: Association XY, Governmental organization: Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of Sarajevo Canton
<b>Target group</b>	Schoolteachers teaching grades 5-9 and engaged in delivering comprehensive sexuality education, holding a “teaching faculty” or “pedagogy faculty” diploma.
<b>Main learning objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Teachers are familiar with key information related to sexual and reproductive health and rights (anatomy and physiology, contraception and family planning, sexually transmitted infections, sexual diversity, gender and social context, pleasure)</li> <li>■ Teachers are aware of the specific needs and potential vulnerabilities related to sexual and reproductive health and rights that adolescents face</li> <li>■ Teachers demonstrate attitudes that are supportive for implementation of comprehensive sexuality education in schools</li> <li>■ Teachers use supplied modules and teaching tools/techniques, aligned with international standards, in delivering comprehensive sexuality education in schools</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	<p>During the two-day in-service training, the following topics were covered through interactive sessions and workshops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Implementation modalities of comprehensive sexuality education in formal education</li> <li>■ Health status of adolescents in Bosnia and Herzegovina</li> <li>■ Nutrition, substance use and abuse, physical activities, violence and inclusion of diversity – linkages to health and sexual and reproductive health and rights</li> <li>■ Sexuality and sexual and reproductive health and rights</li> <li>■ Anatomy and physiology of the male and female sexual and reproductive system</li> <li>■ Contraception, family planning and adolescent pregnancies</li> <li>■ Sexually transmitted infections</li> <li>■ Gender, social norms and sexual and reproductive health and rights – how to challenge rigid and harmful social norms through education</li> <li>■ Sexuality, sexual diversity and gender</li> <li>■ Peer pressure – negative and positive</li> <li>■ Psychosocial competencies – educational strategy for promotion and protection of sexual and reproductive health and rights</li> <li>■ New adolescence – new trends, risks and opportunities</li> <li>■ Orientation programme – multisectoral approach in promoting and protecting sexual and reproductive health and rights (education, health and non-governmental sectors)</li> </ul>

- Youth-friendly services and services related to sexual and reproductive health and rights (when/why/how/where to access)

During the training, participants engaged in a variety of exercises, educational games and role plays, all designed to provide additional skills and teaching techniques that participants can use in their daily work in schools. The intention in using such teaching techniques in educating teachers was to provide examples of how they can be used in implementing comprehensive sexuality education classes with students.

The training was designed as part of an in-service educational programme that lasted for 12 months. Every participant had to pass the two-day training, while additional instruction was provided through an online support group established by the resource centre for teachers and youth workers.

The training was mandatory for teachers who are implementing comprehensive sexuality education in Sarajevo Canton and each participant attending the full training course received a certificate signed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of Sarajevo Canton and Association XY.

### Implementation

The series of training courses for teachers were implemented as part of a one-year project. Each primary school in Sarajevo Canton (65 schools) was obliged to send three of its teachers to the training. Invitations sent to schools were signed by the Minister of Education. The project was funded by international institutions (UNFPA and IPPF EN).

The evaluation during the pilot phase of the teacher training programme found that teachers received the training very well and saw enormous value in this initiative. However, a need for further improvement of the training was identified. These gaps are currently being addressed through another UNFPA-funded initiative.

### Further information

#### Related publications:

- Healthy lifestyles – Curriculum, manual for teachers and workbook for students (in Bosnian):  
<http://www.asocijacijaxy.org/uimages/publikacije/Prirucnik%20Adolescenti.pdf>  
<http://www.asocijacijaxy.org/uimages/publikacije/pub57.pdf>  
<http://www.asocijacijaxy.org/uimages/publikacije/pub56.pdf>  
<http://www.asocijacijaxy.org/uimages/publikacije/pub39.pdf>

#### Contact information of organizations:

- Association XY - <http://www.asocijacijaxy.org/>  
E-mail: [bhfpaxy@bih.net.ba](mailto:bhfpaxy@bih.net.ba), Phone: +387 33 260 763
- Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of Sarajevo Canton  
<http://mon.ks.gov.ba/>

## Bulgaria

<b>Title</b>	<b>Alphabet for you and for me – programme for sexual and reproductive health education in grades 5-8</b>
<b>Country</b>	Bulgaria
<b>Institutions</b>	Governmental organization: National Centre of Public Health and Analyses, under the Bulgarian Ministry of Health
<b>Target group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Secondary-school teachers</li> <li>■ Students in grades 5-8 in Bulgarian schools</li> <li>■ Parents of these students</li> </ul>
<b>Main learning objectives</b>	<p>The programme aims to equip schoolteachers to deliver comprehensive sexuality education in grades 5 to 8 in Bulgarian schools</p> <p>The main objectives of the programme are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ to support teachers in delivering a programme based on an experiential teaching-learning methodology, e.g. by introducing them to interactive educational methods and ways these could be used in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights</li> <li>■ to develop knowledge, attitudes and skills for responsible sexual and health behaviour among students aged 11-15</li> <li>■ to support individual work by students with suitable learning exercises tailored to different ages</li> <li>■ to introduce parents to the programme</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	<p>The programme includes the following materials: manual for teachers, book for parents, notebook for individual work by students.</p> <p>The programme covers the following topics: interactive methods of education, me and others, changes in my body, my personality, in the world of feelings, friendship and love, gender roles and relationships, intimacy and intimate relationships, eroticism, risky behaviours and sexual health, prevention of unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, HIV and AIDS, violence, responsible sexual behaviour, sexuality and culture.</p> <p>The training for teachers is organized in two modules (personal development and sexual and reproductive health and rights) lasting five days each, 80 training hours in total.</p> <p>After successfully completing the training, teachers receive certificates that allow them to teach comprehensive sexuality education training courses as an elective subject in schools.</p> <p>The piloted training agenda could be used as either a pre-service or an in-service training programme, as both methods have proved successful in the past.</p>

**Implementation**

The training has been implemented for approximately 10 years. Since then, the programme has been piloted in approximately 200 schools in Bulgaria. Through the training, over 700 teachers have been equipped with appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes to provide comprehensive sexuality education in schools.

Until now, the training programme has not been definitely endorsed by the Ministry of Education, but it is in use in Bulgarian schools. The training is not mandatory for teachers. Participating teachers are generally nominated by their school directors on the basis of communicated criteria and their readiness to work in this field.

At the end of each module, evaluation is conducted by specially developed questionnaires covering knowledge, attitudes and perception of the training. The evaluation of each training course has shown appropriate knowledge and attitudes and a high level of satisfaction among the participants. At the end of each training course, teachers have given positive feedback on the courses.

The programme was developed with the support of the UNFPA Country Office and published in 2005. The teacher training was funded by UNFPA, by the Ministry of Health under the programme funded by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria and by the State budget of the Ministry of Health in 2009.

“Alphabet for you and for me” was piloted as a separate training course on the Master’s programme for teachers at one of the Bulgarian universities for one year. There was interest among university students, but the course did not continue because of a lack of funding.

A new Law on Preschool and School Education was adopted at the end of 2015. According to the Law, a State educational standard for civic, health, intercultural and ecological education should be developed and adopted by the end of 2016. This standard will allow scaling-up of the training programme.

**Further information**

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 Chief expert

## Estonia

<b>Title</b>	<b>Sexuality education teacher training</b>
<b>Country</b>	Estonia
<b>Institutions</b>	University of Tartu
<b>Target group</b>	University students (future teachers) who graduate as multisubject teachers and have chosen health education as one of their three specialization areas.
<b>Main learning objectives</b>	The University students acquire knowledge about sexual development and pedagogical skills that enable them to deliver sexuality education lessons on a wide range of topics
<b>Description</b>	<p>Topics that are being addressed in the training: school-based sexuality education (contents, methods, planning), sexual development during childhood and adolescence, sexual rights of young people, sexual behaviour of young people, theoretical knowledge and methodological approach for different topics (the meaning of sexuality, words for sexuality, sexual orientation and identity, intimate relationships – friends and lovers, pubertal changes, human body and sexual/reproductive organs – how are they constructed and how do they function, human reproduction, first sexual intercourse, family planning and contraceptive methods, safe sex and condom use, HIV/AIDS, pornography and sexuality, gender roles and sexuality, sexual violence.</p> <p>Upon completion of the pre-service training students receive 3 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System credits (72 hours over one academic year). The lessons are partly delivered online.</p>
<b>Implementation</b>	<p>Elements of sexuality education teaching started in 1995 at the University of Tartu. The current comprehensive programme was introduced in 2009 and has continued since. The training course is firmly established.</p> <p>It is mandatory for teachers-to-be who have chosen health education as one of their specialization areas. The course is free for students, financed by the university.</p> <p>Information on history of the programme: The National Institute for Health Development (governmental) ran an in-service training programme for school teachers delivering health education between 2005 and 2013. It was a one-day course (8 hours) and teachers received a certificate and education credits upon completion. The teacher training manual in sexuality education (see link below) was specially introduced for this training programme. The training was voluntary and financed by the Ministry of Social Affairs. An evaluation was conducted in 2011 by focus-group interviews among teachers – the Teacher Manual was frequently used and highly appreciated; the teacher training was found to be useful and supportive for the teachers.</p>

**Further information**

- Teacher training manual in Estonian:  
[https://intra.tai.ee//images/prints/documents/13033880271\\_Seksuaalkasvatus\\_II\\_ja\\_III\\_kooliaste\\_est.pdf](https://intra.tai.ee//images/prints/documents/13033880271_Seksuaalkasvatus_II_ja_III_kooliaste_est.pdf)
- Teacher training manual in Russian:  
[https://intra.tai.ee//images/prints/documents/130165154818\\_Seksuaalkasvatus\\_II\\_ja\\_III\\_kooliaste\\_rus.pdf](https://intra.tai.ee//images/prints/documents/130165154818_Seksuaalkasvatus_II_ja_III_kooliaste_rus.pdf)
- Evaluation study (in Estonian):  
<http://rahvatervis.ut.ee/bitstream/1/4752/1/Vorobjov2011.pdf>

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## Finland

<b>Title</b>	<b>Sexuality education for children – participatory training for professionals dealing with 0-6-year-olds in day care and health services</b>
<b>Country</b>	Finland
<b>Institutions</b>	Nongovernmental organization: Family Federation of Finland (Väestöliitto)
<b>Target group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Kindergarten educators (early childhood education teachers, lower university degree; bachelor’s degree in social sciences)</li> <li>■ Day-care nurses</li> <li>■ Health-care professionals dealing with 0-6-year-olds</li> </ul>
<b>Main learning objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Basic knowledge of sexual development and common child sexual expressions (verbal and behavioural)</li> <li>■ Ability to communicate about child sexuality with colleagues, with children and with parents</li> <li>■ Ability to implement basic sexuality education in own work</li> <li>■ Ability to use the Standards and Väestöliitto’s webpage for further professional development</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	<p>The in-service training is delivered in the course of one day, followed by two closed supervised chats.</p> <p>The first half of the day consists of short lectures (videorecorded and posted on open-access web page) and addresses the topics: the need for comprehensive sexuality education for children; expressions of child sexuality; gender diversity; cultural diversity; cooperation with parents; male educators.</p> <p>The second half of the day is conducted in group work (“learning café”) and addresses the topics: need for materials in day care/health care; communication with parents; problematic situations at work; children’s engagement; media and sexuality.</p> <p>Participants receive a certificate after the training.</p>
<b>Implementation</b>	<p>The training programme was piloted twice in 2015. The participation was optional and free of charge, funded by the Alli Paasikivi Foundation.</p> <p>The pilot programme was evaluated regarding the outcome with pre- and post-questionnaires. The impact evaluation is scheduled to be conducted one year after the pilot training.</p> <p>Since 2016, the training has been offered at a charge for professionals in municipality health care and early childhood education.</p>

**Further information**

**Related publications and websites:**

- Väestöliitto's webpage "Child and sexuality":  
[www.vaestoliitto.fi/lapsijaseksuaalisuus](http://www.vaestoliitto.fi/lapsijaseksuaalisuus)
- Posters on child-centred and age-appropriate sexuality education (in several languages): <https://bitly.fi/oKIai>
- Lectures on sexuality education for children (in Finnish):  
<https://bitly.fi/ATTiF>
- Final project report - Sexuality education for children (in Finnish):  
<https://bitly.fi/w6b6K>
- Posters on safety skills for children (in several languages):  
[http://www.vaestoliitto.fi/vanhemmuus/tietoa\\_vanhemmille/pienten\\_lasten\\_vanhemat/lapsijaseksuaalisuus/tulosta-juliste-turvataidoista/](http://www.vaestoliitto.fi/vanhemmuus/tietoa_vanhemmille/pienten_lasten_vanhemat/lapsijaseksuaalisuus/tulosta-juliste-turvataidoista/)

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## Switzerland

<b>Title</b>	<b>Sexuality education module</b>
<b>Country</b>	Switzerland
<b>Institutions</b>	University of Teacher Education Lucerne (PH Luzern)
<b>Target group</b>	<p>Students at University who aim to become schoolteachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Master's course Secondary Level I: Students can obtain the qualification to teach at Secondary Level 1 (grades 7 to 9)</li> </ul>
<b>Main learning objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Students know the basics, conditions and objectives of sexuality education as part of skills acquisition for a class teacher based on the curriculum</li> <li>■ Students are able to reflect appropriately on their personal attitudes towards relationships and sexuality in relation to the roles and responsibilities of the class teacher. They can distinguish between personal, social and professional norms and values</li> <li>■ Students are capable of managing any practical situations with sexual content</li> <li>■ Students are able to assess teaching or school and act professionally in a way appropriate to the situation and deal with different lifestyles of their pupils without prejudice, represent them equally and address them appropriately on the basis of fundamental rights</li> <li>■ Students know the aims, contents and methods of sexuality education for youth aged from 12 to 16 years and apply appropriate teaching methods</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	<p>Sexuality education Secondary Level I in the course of “Life Skills” (Fach Lebenskunde) provides information and guidance on sexuality and partnerships in a sensitive and expert manner which is appropriate to the young person’s age and stage of development.</p> <p>As a minimum, this means a comprehensive understanding of relationships, gender and sexuality, and addressing fundamental rights. It also involves body and sexuality education, including early prevention of HIV and sexually transmitted infections, unplanned pregnancy and sexual violence. Sexuality education promotes on the individual level the person’s own responsibility, respectful treatment in partnerships, sexuality and sexual health. Furthermore it is a contribution to the development of tolerance at the level of coexistence.</p> <p>This module, “Sexuality Education”, has a total workload of 30 hours as part of study (1 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System credit). Classroom study comprises five half-days of four lessons on the following topics.</p> <p>1st half-day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sexuality education as part of Secondary Level 1: localization, integration, objectives and contents according to the “Life Skills” curriculum</li> <li>■ Subject of sexuality and sexuality education as well as current data and facts about youth sexuality</li> </ul>

2nd half-day:

- Profession-specific considerations of roles and responsibilities of class teachers regarding sexuality education topics
- Sexuality and society: pluralism of values and social norms and their importance for professional action as a class teacher

3rd half-day:

- Developmental tasks of girls and boys at puberty and protection and risk factors for sexual health
- Methods of physical and sexual education taking into account the prevention of HIV/sexually transmitted infections

4th half-day:

- School as part of the social space: support services for teachers and centres for pupils on the topics of sexual orientation and sexual and reproductive health

5th half-day:

- Flirting, harassment or assault? Recognize and respect own and others' limits in real and virtual spaces
- Aspects of prevention and intervention in sexual violence at school

#### **Implementation**

The Sexuality Education module was established in 2006. It is a core module for all students and is evaluated regularly as part of their studies. The module is considered passed if the attendance requirement is complied with on four out of five half-days.

#### **Further information**

##### **Related publications:**

- Bildungsplanung Zentralschweiz (1995/2001). Lehrplan Lebenskunde für das 7.-9. Schuljahr [Life skills curriculum for grades 7-9]. Lucerne.
- Bodmer NM (2013). Psychologie der Jugendsexualität. Theorie, Fakten, Interventionen [Psychology of youth sexuality. Theories, facts, interventions]. Berne: Huber.
- PHZ Luzern und HSLU – Soziale Arbeit (2008). Grundlagenpapier Sexualpädagogik und Schule [Social work (2008). Foundation paper on teaching of sexuality issues and the school]. Lucerne.

##### **Contact information of institution:**

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## Ukraine

<b>Title</b>	<p><b>Protect yourself from HIV - training in HIV prevention and sexuality education</b></p> <p>Developed with the support of UNESCO, UNICEF, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)</p>
<b>Country</b>	Ukraine
<b>Institutions</b>	Regional institutions of postgraduate education in all regions of Ukraine, Dragomanov National Pedagogical Institute
<b>Target group</b>	This training is targeted at students of pedagogical specialties, teachers of secondary and high school, school psychologists and social workers
<b>Main learning objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Gaining specific knowledge, skills and attitudes in HIV-prevention and sexuality education</li> <li>■ Being able to facilitate workshops with different educators and conduct training in schools with 15-19-year-old adolescents</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	<p>The training can be used as either pre- or in-service training. Over the 40-hour training, participants should acquire:</p> <p>Knowledge on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The interlinked holistic concepts of health, child development, life-skills-based education</li> <li>■ The content of the course</li> <li>■ Features of teaching children and adults</li> <li>■ Interactive methods and characteristics of their application</li> <li>■ Methods and procedures for training in evaluation and self-assessment</li> <li>■ Conditions and criteria for successful implementation of the course in schools</li> </ul> <p>Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ability to clearly articulate learning objectives</li> <li>■ Ability to consider the needs and expectations of participants</li> <li>■ Ability to maintain a friendly atmosphere in the training (lessons)</li> <li>■ Ability to use teaching material and follow recommended plans of training</li> <li>■ Ability to ensure democratic discipline</li> <li>■ Ability to use interactive/participatory teaching</li> <li>■ Ability to make presentations</li> <li>■ Ability to facilitate active discussions</li> <li>■ Ability to organize training of practical skills</li> <li>■ Ability to facilitate feedback</li> <li>■ Ability to self-reflect</li> </ul>

Attitudes:

- Be willing to demonstrate a desire to work with children and adolescents
- Be aware of own needs and motivations
- Be open to critically exploring all topics in an evidence-based way
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of children and adolescents and inform them of these rights
- Be willing to demonstrate openness by accepting feedback from children and adolescents, colleagues, parents, etc.
- Be willing to implement feedback on a regular basis

Upon completion, participants receive a certificate.

**Implementation**

The training courses have been held from 2007 onwards and cover all regions of Ukraine. The participation in the training course is optional. The delivery is funded from local budgets.

**Further information**

Course for secondary schools (in Ukrainian):  
[http://autta.org.ua/ua/resources/textbooks\\_materials/](http://autta.org.ua/ua/resources/textbooks_materials/)  
Course for vocational schools (in Ukrainian):  
<http://autta.org.ua/ua/resources/PTNZ>



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<sup>1</sup> PSHE: personal, social, health and economic education.

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