



WE DEMAND MORE!

A Sexuality Education Advocacy Handbook for Young People

WE DEMAND MORE was created through a partnership between UNESCO, IPPF, and The PACT. The PACT is a global coalition of youth-led and youth-serving organizations that work together to ensure the health, wellbeing and human rights of all young people, with a focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights, and ending the AIDS epidemic in young people. A key priority of The PACT is to ensure that governments are held accountable for providing integrated HIV and sexual health services, and delivering high-quality comprehensive sexuality education.

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to WE DEMAND MORE: a sexuality education advocacy handbook for young people. This handbook is designed for young people who want to improve the sexuality education that is provided in their school, town or country.

You don't need to be an expert on sexuality education or a professional "advocate" to fight for better education on issues relating to sexuality, gender, and relationships. This guide includes all the background information and evidence you need to argue for the importance of providing all young people with good quality comprehensive sexuality education (CSE). It gives advice on how to make change happen where you live, as well as examples of successful CSE advocacy efforts to inspire you – some are simple ideas like writing a letter to a head teacher or school principal, and others involve more "high level" advocacy that targets governments and pushes them to make changes to education policies.

The aim of this guide is to encourage young people to stand up for their right to high-quality education on their sexual and reproductive health, and to support young people to lead advocacy efforts to improve CSE. While it is mostly aimed at young people and youth-led and youth-serving organisations, we hope that it will also be useful to other organisations, volunteers and activists who want to begin or strengthen advocacy around improving sexuality education across the world.

CSE: THE BASICS

Before we dive in – let’s be really clear on what we mean by comprehensive sexuality education.

Comprehensive Sexuality Education, or CSE, is a term used internationally to describe *sex education*. Sometimes, the term sex education doesn’t always make it clear that there is a range of other issues that should be covered. CSE doesn’t just cover sex: it should include a wide range of topics like body image and self-esteem, gender roles and gender expression, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), pregnancy choices, consent and so on. Good CSE sees sexuality as an important part of human development, and equips young people with the skills, attitudes and values they need to enjoy their sexuality and identity, and to make informed decisions about their sexuality and relationships.

“Young people around the world need comprehensive, age-appropriate sexuality education to develop their self-esteem and gain the knowledge and skills to make conscious, healthy and respectful choices about relationships and sexuality”

UNESCO¹

This document refers to “young people”, but it’s important to note that this can mean different things to different people and organizations. The United Nations defines young people as those aged 15-24.² In this document, we use “young people” to mean children and young people – anyone aged up to 24, since we all need to learn about issues relating to gender, sexuality and relationships from a very young age. In fact, we continue learning about these topics throughout our lives into adulthood.

what kind of education do young people receive on sexuality, gender and relationships?

Young people around the world have different experiences of sexuality education. Many say that they didn't receive enough information about sex and sexuality, that the education provided was too late, or that it wasn't relevant to their personal experiences. Sometimes the education is too biological, focusing only on the "science" of sex, STIs and pregnancy, and not focusing on consent, relationships, gender-based violence, etc. Often, sexuality education is delivered by teachers who haven't been properly trained, and who might be unwilling to talk about more controversial or difficult topics. Where governments do promise to provide sexuality education to young people, this is not always delivered equally to all young people, and especially excludes those who are not in school.

"I did not know anything about sex from home or in school - friends and the internet were the only source and they provided incorrect information"

Waseem

"When I was young I remember mother scared me into not having sex, telling me that it's painful, she said I will get hurt and bleed for a week and won't be able to walk."

Helena

"Nobody told me that gender does not define your sexual orientation and they didn't tell me all types of gender only that people are male/female. In school we were told that homosexuality was not normal and the discrimination was so strong that if you were homosexual the school expelled you."

Molly

"First I explored wet dreams I was 12 and was scared. I was shy to talk to my parents and understood after two years in biology class why my body was changing"

Davron

"When I was in sixth grade a male teacher started to teach in the school and he talked to us about condom use – before then, I didn't know what a condom was"

Jorge

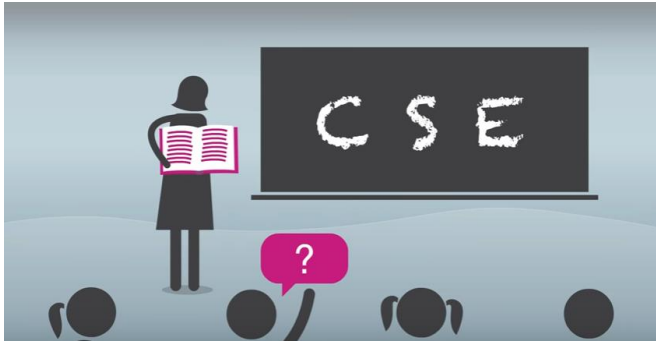
"My parents put fear in me when I was a kid. They told me that when I engage in sexual intercourse, I would not go to heaven."

Dennis

However, the good news is that people all over the world are fighting to improve the state of sexuality education and make sure that governments live up to their agreements on young people's health and education. Young people are the ones who directly benefit from good quality sexuality education, and the ones who are negatively impacted where it isn't provided or isn't good enough to prepare them for the experiences they might have or the decisions they might have to make in real life. Young people who are in school or who have recently left full-time education have a very good understanding of what sexuality education is (or isn't!) being provided in their country, and will often have great ideas on how the situation could be improved. Although there are organizations fighting for better CSE across the world (we link to many in this document) we think it's crucial that young people themselves are recognised as key actors and agents of change, and that their voices and opinions are heard.

We have the evidence to show that when it's done properly, CSE is effective³. It can help young people to avoid unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, and also to increase their knowledge and self-esteem. International human rights agreements support young people's right to accurate information about their health – but sexuality education is still a controversial subject in many places, so we need to make sure we as young people are able to make clear and persuasive arguments for why every young person deserves high-quality CSE, no matter who they are or where they live.

what is “good” CSE?



“Simply making the case for why CSE is important is not enough. We must pay attention to who delivers CSE, where it is delivered, what is delivered, when it is delivered and how it is delivered.”

IPPF⁴

UNESCO, or the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, is the agency within the United Nations that focuses on improving education for all people across the world. UNESCO has produced many useful resources on sexuality education. This includes a short three minute film on the importance of CSE, which you can watch by clicking the image above⁵, and a Global Review of CSE that examines the evidence base for CSE and its positive impact on health outcomes; looks at public support for CSE in different countries; and explores how different policies affect how CSE is delivered in practice.⁶ In general, this review found that while many countries have policies in support of CSE, in practice this isn't being delivered in an inclusive and equitable way. People aren't getting enough information about gender and rights, sexual and gender based violence, or how cultural and religious attitudes influence behaviour. Topics are introduced too late, and are often taught by educators who don't have specialist training on sexuality and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Using UNESCO's recommendations, and our own knowledge of what works, this section shows what “ideal” CSE should look like, to give you a picture of what to aim for. Even in countries where the government does provide CSE, there are usually ways it could be improved - for example to reach young people who aren't in school, or to cover a broader range of issues.

COMPREHENSIVE

Sometimes people say “holistic” – but this basically means that young people should learn about a broad range of topics, not just basic information about anatomy and biology. In this handbook we give examples of standards or guidelines which can be used to check the topics and issues which should be covered, for example UNESCO’s International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education.⁷

RIGHTS-BASED

Although CSE can help young people to be healthier, and can reduce the rates of things like HIV, STIs and unintended pregnancies, it should be taught in such a way that acknowledges young people’s rights. There is no global agreement on the right to CSE, but the United Nations has stated that all people have the right to “equitable and quality education” that includes human rights and gender equality. CSE should recognise the fact that young people have the right to information and education on their health and wellbeing, and the right to make informed decisions about things that affect their lives. For more information on young people’s sexual rights, see IPPF’s guide for young people, “Exclaim!”⁸

FOR ALL AGES

CSE is particularly important for those aged 10-14 as this is when we undergo bodily changes and begin to transition into later adolescence. However, younger children also require information about their bodies and rights, and ideally CSE should start in primary school. UNESCO’s International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education gives some ideas of topics that are appropriate for children aged five to eight. These include things like the differences between girls and boys and how bodies change during puberty, as well as topics like family relationships, love and marriage, privacy and safety, sexual abuse and control over our bodies, and respect for diversity.

“Starting sexuality education in primary school allows children to identify and report inappropriate behaviour (including child abuse) and develop healthy attitudes about their own body and relationships.”

UNESCO⁹

GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE

Good quality education should challenge harmful ideas about men and women and strive for gender equality. This is what gender-transformative means: transforming the normal social views and encouraging equal relationships between people. CSE can promote more gender-equitable attitudes among young people, including addressing attitudes towards violence against women and girls and promoting inclusiveness.¹⁰

IN AND OUT OF SCHOOL

Although experts like UNESCO agree that it is important for CSE to be part of school curricula, there are around 263 million children and young people who aren't in school – so we need to also find ways to provide CSE in other settings, like youth clubs and community centres, so that we can reach as many young people as possible.¹¹

PARTICIPATORY

You might have heard the phrase “nothing about us without us” and this should apply to sexuality education too. Young people know best what they need and should be involved in the planning and evaluation of education programmes to make sure they are relevant to their lives. CSE should cover topics that young people feel will help prepare them for real situations, for example learning about puberty, pornography, falling in love, and other relevant topics.

INCLUSIVE

“Young people” are not all the same and sexuality education should be suitable for different needs and backgrounds. Specifically within the context of sexuality education, young people represent a huge diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity, and this should be reflected in CSE, for example by not assuming that all couples are one man and one woman, using words like “partner” instead of “girlfriend” or “boyfriend” and not assuming anything about anyone’s sexual preferences or activities.

“More than four in five (85%) gay, lesbian and bisexual young people in the UK are never taught in school about biological or physical aspects of same-sex relationships.”

Stonewall¹²

ACCURATE

There are a lot of myths out there relating to sex - and many parents/carers themselves might not know enough about sexuality to correct these, or they might be embarrassed or unwilling to talk to children about these issues. CSE should be based on scientific research and evidence to ensure that young people have the accurate information they need to make informed choices.

PROFESSIONAL

One of the problems often recognised with CSE is that in many cases, it is not delivered by teachers who are specifically trained on CSE, so they might not be able speak confidently on matters relating to gender, sexuality and relationships. CSE educators should receive high-quality, regular training and be able to engage young people with a range of abilities and identities.

CONTEXTUAL

There are international and regional standards for good CSE programmes, but it's important that programmes suit local contexts and pay attention to particular topics that might affect young people in that area, for example, child marriage or female genital mutilation. Local data and information can help to better understand what young people's specific needs are.

LINKED TO SERVICES

Young people don't only need information and education about their sexual and reproductive health, but also to access services that can provide further care and support. CSE should provide links to local services that can support young people and let them know their rights to access them.

EMPOWERING

Education should not just be a one-way lecture – CSE should give young people a chance to gain knowledge but also to think critically and be empowered to make healthy choices and treat others with respect. CSE should be “skills-based”, and provide young people with life skills like self-awareness, assertiveness, and communication. This approach empowers young people to make conscious and informed choices about relationships and sexuality, and take control over their own lives.

A SAFE SPACE

Educational institutions and organizations should have child protection policies that protect young people's right to privacy and confidentiality but can support them when they are at risk. Schools and other places where CSE is taught should be non-discriminatory and have strong policies against bullying, sexual harassment, discrimination and violence so that children are safe, healthy and able to learn.

SEX POSITIVE

It has been shown that education programmes that promote abstinence (not having sex until you are married) do not actually stop young people having sex, and may affect their likelihood to use condoms or other forms of contraception when they do.¹³ Of course, waiting to have sex might be the right choice for some young people, but it won't be the right choice for everyone. CSE should promote a positive approach to sexuality and support young people to make the choices that are best for them. This is closely linked to the rights-based approach that we discussed earlier in this section.

“A safe learning environment, free from bullying, discrimination, harassment, and violence, is essential for effective learning in any subject, but particularly for CSE. Girls, especially, are also vulnerable to sexual advances by adults encountered on their way to or from school. Young people, particularly boys, who do not conform to conventional gender roles or who are perceived as homosexual may be subject to bullying and violence as well and students with a disability or who are perceived as HIV-positive may be stigmatized. Curricula that avoid mention of these topics undermine students’ ability to protect themselves and have a silencing effect on their ability to seek help.”

UNESCO¹⁴

ADVOCACY 101

Advocacy means different things to different people, but it basically means identifying and calling for change in laws, policies, practices and structures in order to improve people's lives. It refers to the different ways we can build political, financial or public support to influence leaders and decision makers to address the root causes of problems and to generate long-term sustainable solutions.¹⁵ For example, we can advocate for increased support for a cause, to influence decision makers, to build an environment that enables young people to exercise their rights, or to change laws or legislation. Change can take place on several levels, such as at **local level** (for example with local government, police, religious leaders, school system), at **national level** (for example with national governments, ministries), or at **international level** (for example with UN agencies or the World Bank). Change usually happens in at least three different phases:

HEAD

knowledge

First, your target audience needs to have accurate information in order to understand the change you are advocating for and why you are proposing it.

HEART

attitude

Even if your target audience has all the technical information, they might still need to be convinced about the benefits and value of your proposal, to know in their heart that what you are proposing is the right thing to do.

HANDS

practice

Once you have allies for your cause, you may still need to support them to translate the proposed change into action. This might involve working with other individuals or organisations to maximise your effectiveness and monitoring how the change is being implemented to make sure that your strategies are working effectively towards change.

MAKING THE CASE FOR CSE

As you might know, CSE remains a controversial subject in many countries, and even where it has been approved by the government and is taught in schools, there still may be certain sensitive topics that are not taught. There might even be groups that campaign *against* CSE to try to reduce the number of young people who receive it. Before you start any action to try to improve sexuality education where you live, you need to make sure you have a good understanding of how and why CSE helps young people stay healthy, and how to address some of the arguments of people who are against CSE. We have provided a really brief overview here but you can look at the “resources” section for more detailed information.

- ✓ CSE has a positive impact on sexual and reproductive health, and can contribute to **reducing sexually transmitted infections (including HIV) and unintended pregnancy**.¹⁶
- ✓ Sexuality education does not encourage young people to have sex earlier but has a positive impact on safer sexual behaviours and **can delay age of first sex and increase condom use**.¹⁷
- ✓ CSE empowers young people to reflect critically on their environment and behaviours, and **promotes gender equality and equitable social norms**, which are important contributing factors for improving health outcomes including HIV infection rates.¹⁸
- ✓ CSE can **improve knowledge and self-esteem**, changing attitudes and gender and social norms, and building self-efficacy.
- ✓ Integrating content on gender and rights can make sexuality education even more effective: one review found that programmes that addressed gender or power relations were associated with a **significant decrease in pregnancy, childbearing or STIs**.¹⁹
- ✓ The impact of CSE increases when delivered together with efforts to expand access to a full range of high- quality, **youth-friendly services and supplies** (like contraception).²⁰

CSE FAQs

This section provides some frequently asked questions about CSE and some answers.

Q What is “peer education”, and is it effective?

A “Peer education” is when people teach their own peers about a certain topic. In this context it refers to young people educating other young people on issues related to sexual and reproductive health and rights and relies on the idea that people are more likely to change their behaviour if they are advised or recommended by peers that they know and trust.²¹ Evidence shows that while peer education is a good tool for sharing information, and to be very beneficial to peer educators themselves, peer education programmes have limited effects on improving health outcomes if they are not combined with other initiatives. Peer education is useful as a way to refer young people to health services. Also, peer education on CSE is particularly useful to reach young people from marginalised groups who might be stigmatised by “traditional” health services or education and are more comfortable engaging with someone who understands their issues. This includes young sex workers, young drug users, young people who are living with HIV, etc.²²

Q Can CSE actually change deeply entrenched views and behaviours?

A Evidence shows that providing sexuality education programs can have a real impact on young people’s behaviours, as well as views and values in the community. For example, a report by Plan UK and Social Development Direct showed that CSE can promote a positive shift in social norms around gender-based violence, and can target harmful ideas of masculinity and gender stereotypes in schools and the wider community.²³ A review of 22 sexuality education programmes found that 80% of the programmes that addressed gender or power relations were associated with a significant decrease in pregnancy, childbearing and STIs.²⁴

Q What is “evolving capacity”?

A Evolving capacity, also sometimes called emerging capacity, refers to how young people mature and grow, and how their ability to take responsibility for their actions increases as they get older. This happens at a different pace for all young people. CSE can help young people to develop their capacity to make decisions about their own health and healthcare.²⁵

Q What is sex positivity?

A Sex positivity is commonly interpreted as meaning “all sex is good” – but in reality, sex positivity is an attitude that celebrates sexuality as a part of life that can enhance happiness, bringing energy and celebration. Sex positive approaches strive to achieve ideal experiences, rather than only working to prevent negative experiences. Sex positive approaches acknowledge and tackle the various risks associated with sexuality, without reinforcing fear, shame or taboo surrounding the sexualities of young people.²⁶

Q Why do we need to talk about gender in CSE?

A A UNESCO review of CSE programmes found that those which addressed gender or power relations were five times as likely to be effective than programmes that didn’t address these topics. 80% of programmes that discussed gender or power were associated with a significant decrease in STIs or unintended pregnancy.²⁷ This research suggests that young people who have attitudes of equality about gender roles in relationships are more likely to delay sexual debut, to use condoms, and to use contraception when having sex which can lead to pregnancy. It’s also important to discuss gender because gender is a spectrum of identities, and it’s important to recognise that some people don’t identify as “male” or “female”. Humans are wonderfully diverse and we need to respect all of our identities.

INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

Before advocating for better CSE it's important to know not only about the evidence which supports it, but also about the international structures which support provision of sexuality education to young people. After all, young people (aged 15-24) make up one fifth of the world's population – achieving their rights and wellbeing should be at the centre of any movements to increase human rights and wellbeing. UNESCO's 2016 Global Review CSE shows that most countries embrace the concept of CSE and are seeking to strengthen its implementation.²⁸ This increasing political commitment to CSE worldwide is a great thing, and it is a good starting point to advocacy to ensure that the content and delivery of CSE truly benefits all young people.

the Sustainable Development Goals

One helpful place to start is the “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. This is a set of 17 internationally agreed goals (the “Sustainable Development Goals” or SDGs) which all 193 United Nations member states have committed to that will guide policy and funding until 2030. Within the “2030 Agenda” are goals to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind.

When advocating for CSE you can use the SDGs to strengthen your argument that all young people should receive education on gender, sexuality and rights. There are a few key targets that you can emphasise during your advocacy. For example, under Goal 3 strives to ensure healthy lives and wellbeing for all. Under this goal, Target 3.7 commits Member States to ensuring “universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes”.

Under Goal 4, which is about inclusive and quality education, Target 4.7 states that by 2030 all learners should “acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.” Although CSE is not directly mentioned, it has clear links to young people’s knowledge and skills on human rights issues, gender equality and citizenship.

Goal 5 seeks to ensure gender equality and to empower women and girls. Under this goal, Target 5.6 holds governments accountable for ensuring “*universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights*”. We have established that CSE fulfils young people’s sexual rights, and that good CSE can help to create positive changes to attitudes around gender.

the Eastern and Southern Africa commitment

If you live in Angola, Botswana, Burundi, DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, South Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia or Zimbabwe, your government signed up to a the “Eastern and Southern Africa Commitment” (ESA Commitment) in December 2013. The ESA Commitment commits governments to support sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health services for young people, and suggests initiating age-appropriate CSE during primary school, before young people are sexually active. If you’re from Eastern or Southern Africa, also check out [Young People Today](#), a partnership between the United Nations and Ministries of Health from the ESA region which focuses on young people’s rights to CSE.

“Using agreed international standards, ensure that CSE is age, gender and culturally appropriate, rights-based and includes core elements of knowledge, skills and values as preparation for adulthood: decisions about sexuality, relationships, gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and citizenship.”

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA COMMITMENT²⁹

the Montevideo Consensus

The Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development is an agreement in Latin America and the Caribbean which covers sexual and reproductive health, young people's rights, and gender equity.³⁰ The agreement highlights the rights of all people to "embrace the right to a safe and full sex life, as well as the right to take free, informed, voluntary and responsible decisions on their sexuality, sexual orientation and gender identity, without coercion, discrimination or violence". It specifically calls for the implementation of CSE from early childhood, recognising the evolving capacity of young people, and promotes education that is based on human rights and equality. Most importantly, it recognises that young people and adolescents are "rights-holders and stakeholders in development" – if you are doing advocacy on CSE in this region, you can use the Montevideo Consensus to show that these agreements have been made to promote the sexual and reproductive rights of young people at a high level.

the High-Level Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS

The "Political Declaration" is another internationally adopted document which contains specific targets and actions that must be achieved if the world is to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030.³¹ The declaration calls governments to protect access to "appropriate, high-quality, evidence-based HIV information, education and services without stigma and discrimination with full respect for rights to privacy, confidentiality and informed consent". It also emphasises the need to increase the availability of "scientifically accurate, age-appropriate comprehensive education, relevant to cultural contexts, that provides adolescent girls and boys and young women and men, in and out of school, consistent with their evolving capacities, with information on sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention, gender equality and women's empowerment, human rights, physical, psychological and pubertal development and power in relationships between women and men". This is a key document in the global response to HIV and AIDS and specifically outlines CSE as a vital tool to promote young people's rights and healthy development.

HOW TO ADVOCATE FOR CSE

In this section we outline some basic steps which could help form a campaign. Most of the examples are focused on local or national advocacy, but there are also resources listed for those who are engaged with international advocacy, such as campaigning at the United Nations. It can be best to start local, with achievable goals, and grow your campaign so that you can take on bigger challenges with more experience!

step one: determine your goals

What do you want to change? Just saying you want there to be sexuality education in your school or country is not specific enough. Your advocacy will be much more effective if you have a really clear goal and objectives, so before you even start campaigning for change it's useful to think about what exactly you want to achieve. This will also make sure that everyone who is involved with your advocacy campaign is giving consistent and clear messages. You might have loads of things that you want to change, but a campaign will be more effective if it's very targeted and tailored. Sometimes it's a good idea to brainstorm with a group of friends of all the issues you can think of, and then prioritise these in order to pick just one or two that you want to focus on. When you're doing this, try to identify the main causes of each of the issues – for example, perhaps your school doesn't offer CSE because of opposition from parents or the religious community, because of lack of money, because of lack of trained teachers, or just because the school leadership isn't aware of the importance or the benefits of CSE. The causes of your issue will change the way that you try to advocate to change the situation.

So let's say you have decided that the CSE in your school is not comprehensive enough, and you want to improve it.

Your **GOAL** builds on this to make it more specific. It adds who you're going to target, what the solution would be, and when it will be achieved. For example, your goal might be that your school principal will implement a new CSE curriculum in your school within the next 18 months.

Your **OBJECTIVES** break this down into more concrete steps you need to take to reach your overall goal – think of them as the steps on a ladder leading up to your goal on the top step. Your objectives should be clear and focused, and you shouldn't have more than about three. An objective could be to hold a meeting with students and the principal within the next three months in order to share your concerns about the current curriculum and provide ideas on how to change it and what's needed to do that.

You also need to come up with some **INDICATORS**. These are things that you will measure to see whether or not you are on your way to meeting your advocacy goal. The more specific these are, the easier they will be to measure. They could be things like the number of teachers who support the idea of a new curriculum; number of parents who sign a letter or petition for improved CSE, etc.

SMART OBJECTIVES

The best objectives are SMART ones. This stands for:

- ✓ **Specific** – focus in on the who/what/when and where of what you want to achieve
- ✓ **Measurable** – what you do should be able to be measured, counted or observed
- ✓ **Achievable** – your goal should be realistic and achievable
- ✓ **Relevant** – the change you aim to make should be based on an identified need, suited to your context
- ✓ **Time-bound** – you should include a realistic time-frame

The PACT has produced an advocacy strategy toolkit which goes through this in detail and has lots of useful checklists and templates that you can use to develop your strategy. See the "Resources" section for more details.

step two: collect your evidence

Any goals and objectives you make to introduce or improve CSE will necessarily be informed by evidence. This doesn't have to be academic research, your evidence may also be gained from talking to people in your community. The evidence you need may already exist (for example, a report which shows that girls are experiencing sexual harassment in schools) but you may also decide to gather evidence yourself. This might be:

- ✓ An online survey which asks young people in your country to report on the sexuality education they received in school, and which topics were covered
- ✓ Focus groups with young people about what they would like CSE to cover
- ✓ Interviews with parents about what they would like their children to learn about in CSE
- ✓ A questionnaire which tests young people's knowledge on certain topics or assesses their attitudes

There are two main types of evidence:

Quantitative evidence can be counted or measured. It's usually numbers, for example the number of people who learn about consent in CSE, or the number of schools in your area with a policy on providing CSE.

Qualitative evidence can't be counted, but gathers experiences or attitudes from people. Qualitative evidence includes things like interviews with young people about the CSE they have received and what they thought about it.

RESOURCES ON DATA AND EVIDENCE

- ✓ The *Explore* toolkit by Rutgers gives lots of useful information about how to do research and collect data, including tips for carrying out interviews and focus groups.³²
- ✓ The *Sexuality Education Review and Assessment Tool (SERAT)* created by UNESCO can be used to collect data about school-based CSE programmes at primary and secondary level.³³
- ✓ IPPF's *Inside and Out* assessment tool adapts the SERAT tool for use with CSE programmes in and out of school settings.³⁴

step three: gather support

You are much more likely to have success if your campaign makes a lot of noise, and this is best achieved by having lots of supporters. It's important to work out where you can gain support, and try to make as many partnerships and alliances as necessary. You will probably need to tailor information according to different groups to make it more relevant and accessible.

YOUNG PEOPLE

If your campaign is based in a school, college or university, you can gain supporters by holding talks or setting up an information table on campus, with leaflets, petitions, or sign-up sheets. You may also want to think about using social media and email to keep up momentum and spread awareness about what you are trying to achieve. Try linking up with student groups and organisations working in education or young people's health to spread your message to their networks of young people too.

PARENTS AND FAMILIES

When it comes to CSE it's very important to try to gain the support of parents and carers. Messages to parents could be focused around positive health and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people. Consult with members of the community to find ways to talk about CSE which are culturally sensitive, and use evidence and statistics to reassure parents that CSE is not damaging. You could arrange a public meeting for young people and older people to discuss CSE openly, and try to work together on common goals such as young people's increased health and safety.

TEACHERS OR SCHOOL LEADERS

By providing CSE programmes, schools support student health and foster their academic achievement, helping young people to avoid unintended pregnancy and other issues which might affect school attendance. Teachers will need to see evidence which supports the educational benefits of CSE, and which fits with their existing policies. Using information from well-respected organizations like UNESCO can help to make your case, as well as finding relevant sections of national and school policies which support young people's wellbeing. Teachers and governors may respond well to letters from parents and health professionals outlining their concerns about provision of CSE, as well as young people themselves.

POLITICIANS

Members of Parliament have a duty to respond to the needs of people living in their region (their 'constituency'). If you are trying to talk to politicians and decision-makers about CSE, it's crucial to focus on public support for your cause – for example, a petition signed by lots of members of your community, or a letter-writing campaign to show widespread support. Politicians won't necessarily know a lot about CSE and its benefits, so make sure you share evidence, and this could include your own experiences of CSE in or out of school. You should research their individual or party views on issues related to young people or sexual and reproductive health and try to link to that – for example, perhaps they have done previous work on women's rights which you could link to gender within CSE.

MEDIA

Getting individual journalists (and even celebrities!) to understand and support your cause can really help to raise awareness and put public pressure on politicians and other decision makers to make changes. As well as needing the facts, journalists may also want individual "case studies" to bring the story alive. Speak to other young people in your area or youth group to see if any of them are prepared to speak out about their own experiences of CSE and what they would like to see change in the future.

Remember – even when you are dealing with organizations and institutions, really you are dealing with the PEOPLE who work in them. So your target shouldn't be your school but rather the principal of your school; not just the media but an individual journalist. Changing just a few people's minds about an issue can make a big difference.

Check out the "Resources" section of this guide which has lots more advocacy tools developed by The PACT, including the Advocacy Strategy Toolkit and guides on how to do social media advocacy and how to write advocacy letters. There are also some useful documents for other people who might want to support you, including parents, teachers, and community leaders.

step four: take action!

Below we give some ideas for possible actions you might want to carry out to raise awareness and push for better CSE. Your activities will depend on your objectives and the situation in your area or country – you will have the best idea of which are the most appropriate activities that will work in your context. Remember that your safety and wellbeing should be your top priority. Before you do any action, have a think about the risks you might encounter, and don't attempt anything that might put you or your peers at risk of harm. ECPAT International's guide (listed in the Resources section) has some tips on keeping safe when doing advocacy.

do some research on CSE in your region

- ◆ Check out the [Demographic and Health Surveys](#) from your country. These are large national surveys which ask a range of questions, but include issues like health, education, age of first sexual intercourse, teenage pregnancy rates and more. You can make tables of this information using the "[Stat Compiler](#)"
- ◆ The [Sexual Rights Database](#) has lots of information about different laws and policies around the world relating to sexual and reproductive health and rights, including on sexuality education
- ◆ The [Guttmacher Institute](#) shares research collected on sexual health issues around the world, including a section on teens
- ◆ [Demystifying Data](#) is a guide to using data to advocate for young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights. On the website you'll find an advocacy guide as well as a specific document which lists lots of different indicators to measure CSE

create your own evidence on CSE

- ◆ Develop a survey for young people to find out more about what they have been taught, or interview teachers and parents about their knowledge of and attitudes towards CSE
- ◆ Try to get hold of your school's policy or curriculum on CSE, health or wellbeing to see what's covered and what's not
- ◆ Use a CSE assessment tool (like the ones on page 19) to monitor and evaluate your CSE programmes

gather support for your cause and take action!

- ◆ Use your evidence to write a “briefing paper” on CSE which outlines the evidence for CSE and why it is relevant for young people in your country. Make sure you also provide some recommendations of what you want to happen and how CSE could be improved. You could write this in collaboration with a local organisation working on health or youth. You could also organize a public launch for the paper to bring together decision makers and young people to share expertise. See this briefing from the [UK Sex Education Forum](#) for some inspiration.
- ◆ If you are part of an organisation, create an official position statement on CSE. The [International Federation of Medical Students Associations](#) (IFMSA) developed one that you could use as a template.
- ◆ Hold a public panel discussion on the benefits of CSE and what’s lacking in your region. You could invite young people and organisations working on youth, education or sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as key decision makers and media representatives, to ensure that the discussion has wider reach. If you have access to the internet, create a hashtag and live-tweet the event to open it up to an even bigger audience.
- ◆ Engage with the media by sharing articles and press releases with local/national TV, radio and newspapers. It can be powerful for young people to publicly speak up for their right to sexuality education, but make sure you are confident to answer tricky questions on the spot! Using social media is a way to spread messages even further. PACT Tanzania has produced a [helpful toolkit](#) for dealing with the media, which can help with writing press releases, taking part in interviews and more.
- ◆ The Albert Einstein Institution’s document, “[198 Methods of Nonviolent Action](#)”, gives 198 ideas (yes, really!) of how to do advocacy. Some of them are the more traditional methods covered above, but they also include things like using art (like paintings or cartoons), music and theatre (like writing songs or performance pieces), marches and parades, and more.
- ◆ [Amplify Change](#) also has loads of useful ideas for different activities you could do to improve CSE.
- ◆ Don’t forget to engage with other CSE advocates worldwide and share your actions and experiences on the [CSE Advocacy Hub](#) developed by UNFPA, UNESCO and IPPF!

step five: find out what worked

When we do advocacy it is important to monitor and measure what we're doing, so that we can see what is working and what is not working. This is so we don't keep putting time and effort into something that's unsuccessful – and also so that if we are successful, we can share our knowledge with other young people to replicate in their area.

This is why it's so important to have SMART objectives. You can then check yourself whether you are achieving your objectives within your time frame. It's also why we develop indicators (things we measure throughout the advocacy plan) in order to see how well we are doing. This means that during your advocacy, you need to be measuring your progress. For example, how many parents signed your petition letter? How many letters did you send to Members of Parliament? How many people came to your public meeting? How many likes did your video get on Facebook? And ultimately – did your school, region or government agree to any major changes in CSE policy or programming? Make sure that you continue to refer to this throughout your plan. For example, if your objective was to meet with ten teachers during 2017, and by September you have only met with three, explore the reasons for this. Was your objective just not achievable in the first place? Are teachers unwilling to meet with you because of pressure from the principal? What could help you to achieve this goal?

It's really important not to feel too disappointed if your advocacy doesn't achieve your ultimate goal, especially if your goal is to change national policy or to influence your government to commit to something. This is really hard to do, and can take many years and lots of time and money! Think about the other things your plan has achieved, for example meetings with school leaders or government ministers, coverage in the local or national newspaper, an increase in support from parents to provide CSE in your school. Advocacy can take a long time, but each person who changes their opinion or takes an action based on your activities should be considered a success.

FACING OPPOSITION

Wherever you are in the world it's likely that your campaigns for better CSE will meet some resistance. Even though young people's right to education is supported by international human rights agreements, bodies like the United Nations, and global charity organisations like IPPF, this doesn't mean all individuals agree that it's a good idea. Sometimes this opposition to CSE is based on misinformation or a misunderstanding of what young people will learn, and that why it's helpful to know what these groups think about CSE so that you can correct any false or misleading information and prepare your "counter argument". It is also important to make sure that from the start you are working alongside those in the community, teachers and parents and perhaps religious leaders, to show that CSE is wanted and needed by young people and that it helps young people to be healthy. This section gives some examples of common arguments that people have against CSE, and provides some responses that you could give.

Teaching young people about sex and sexuality just encourages them to have more sex, at a younger age, and therefore leads to more unintended pregnancies and STIs.

Actually, no – teaching young people about their bodies, sexuality, and relationships is shown to have a "protective" effect on their health and wellbeing. There is no evidence that receiving CSE leads to earlier sexual experience, and might even delay "sexual debut" (encouraging young people to wait to have sex until they are older). Additionally, as the evidence in this handbook shows, young people who receive high-quality sexuality education are more likely to use condoms or other contraception when they do decide to have sex, have fewer sexual partners, and have increased knowledge about condoms and HIV.³⁵

Parents will never agree to their children receiving sexuality education in school or outside the home.

Despite vocal opposition from some groups who oppose the provision of CSE in schools, parents in many parts of the world do in fact support their children learning about topics related to their sexual and reproductive health. A UNESCO online poll of parents in China found that 90% were in favour of their children learning about sexuality education, and survey data countries in Eastern and Southern Africa shows that over 60% of adults agree that children should be taught about condoms.³⁶

Children in primary/elementary school are much too young to receive CSE.

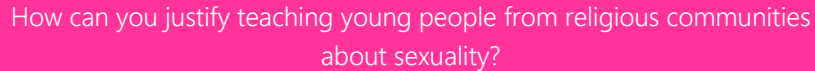
A 2015 survey in the UK found that a quarter of girls had started their periods before having the chance to learn about this in school.³⁷ Additionally, 50% hadn't learned how to get help for unwanted touching or sexual abuse.³⁸ Children and young people have a right to learn about the issues that affect them, and high-quality, age-appropriate education is not damaging for them, but can help them to make informed choices and understand body changes. Research suggests that CSE for young adolescents (10–14 year-olds) is critical, as this age marks a key transition between childhood and older adolescence. Younger children will receive information that is relevant to their development, such as respect, privacy, consent, and control over their own bodies, which can help to keep them safe and to recognise and report abuse. UNESCO's International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education proposes an age-appropriate set of topics for ages five up to eighteen, and the Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe advise that CSE starts from birth. As we've mentioned before, CSE isn't only about sex, it's meant to empower all people to understand and know their bodies and to enable us to live happy and healthy lives.

We should be teaching children not to have sex until they are married.

Not everyone will choose to get married, and in many countries there are restrictions on who is able to get married, for example those in same-sex relationships, so education that assumes this is unfair and unrealistic. There is also evidence to suggest that education programmes which focus on abstinence (advising young people not to have sex until they are married) do not provide the information young people need to negotiate their real lives and do not produce positive health outcomes. 'Abstinence-only' education has been found to be ineffective in preventing HIV, incidence of sexually transmitted infections, and adolescent pregnancy³⁹.

Sexuality education is a luxury we don't need to provide, we should be spending our money and time on other subjects.

CSE is part of the wider education that young people receive to help them stay healthy and safe and support them to become well-informed citizens. The United Nations Commission on Population and Development's 2012 resolution on Adolescents and Youth calls on governments to work meaningfully with young people to "give full attention to meeting the reproductive health-service, information and education needs of young people, with full respect for their privacy and confidentiality, free of discrimination, and to provide them with evidence-based comprehensive education on human sexuality, sexual and reproductive health, human rights and gender equality to enable them to deal in a positive and responsible way with their sexuality."⁴⁰ CSE programs can actually be highly cost effective, especially when they are compulsory and integrated into the mainstream school curriculum – because spending money on high-quality CSE saves costs in the future related to unwanted pregnancy, HIV and other STIs.⁴¹ CSE also provides young people with important life skills which empowers them to make their own choices in life.

A pink speech bubble with a tail pointing to the left, containing the text 'How can you justify teaching young people from religious communities about sexuality?'.

How can you justify teaching young people from religious communities about sexuality?

Young people from all different backgrounds and faiths have experiences and questions about sexuality, their changing bodies and current and future relationships. Although there are religious-based groups and individuals who oppose the provision of CSE to young people, it is a mistake to assume all faith groups will not support education on this topic. Many faith leaders and community members recognise the importance of giving young people accurate, non-stigmatising information about their health and sexual lives in order for them to be happy, safe and healthy. Groups such as Catholics for Choice and the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice show that religious support for young people's access to information and services relating to their sexual health and wellbeing does exist. For example, in Kenya, a group of organisations working to prepare a new CSE curriculum was hit with criticism and backlash from religious leaders and church groups in the country, who said that the proposed CSE curriculum promoted "unfettered sexual promiscuity, abortion and sexual aberrations". Instead of being discouraged, the groups advocating for better CSE made sure to better engage religious organisations and religious leaders, and arranged informal meetings to find common ground on which to build better sexuality education. They are encouraging those in schools, governments, churches and mosques who have seen the positive effects of CSE to speak out.⁴²

RESOURCES

We hope that this handbook has inspired and motivated you to make a change for better CSE in your country or region, and has given some ideas on how you could do this. There are lots of really useful tools and documents referenced throughout this handbook which will provide you with more information and templates to design and implement your advocacy strategy.

The PACT resources

- ◆ [ACT!2015 Advocacy Strategy Toolkit](#) (this one's in English, but you can find French and Russian versions [here](#))
- ◆ [Negotiation Brief on CSE](#) which situates CSE in the policy context and is useful for high level advocacy
- ◆ [Guide to blog writing](#)
- ◆ [Guide to developing a social media strategy](#)
- ◆ [Guide to writing advocacy letters](#)

UNESCO Resources

- ◆ [Cost and Cost-Effectiveness Analysis of School-Based Sexuality Education Programmes in Six Countries](#)
- ◆ [Levers of Success: Case Studies of National Sexuality Education Programmes](#)
- ◆ [Comprehensive Sexuality Education: The Challenges and Opportunities of Scaling Up](#)
- ◆ [Young People Today: Time to Act Now](#) – why adolescents and young people need CSE and sexual and reproductive health services in Eastern and Southern Africa
- ◆ [Sexuality Education Review and Assessment Tool \(SERAT\)](#)
- ◆ SAfAIDS and UNESCO's toolkit for community members, [Engaging Communities in CSE](#)

Advocacy Tools

- ◆ IPPF's guide to youth advocacy, [Want to Change the World? Here's How...](#)
- ◆ IPPF's [From Advocacy to Access: Targeted Political Action for Change](#)
- ◆ ECPAT International, [Youth Power: A Manual on youth-led advocacy](#)
- ◆ YouACT's [European Youth Advocacy Handbook](#)
- ◆ The [CSE Advocacy Hub](#), developed by UNFPA with support from UNESCO and IPPF
- ◆ Advocates For Youth's [Youth Activist's Toolkit](#)

Background Information and Further Reading

- ◆ IPPF's 2016 report on CSE, "[Everyone's Right to Know: Delivering Comprehensive Sexuality Education to All Young People](#)"
- ◆ IPPF European Network's [Compendium on young people's SRHR policies in Europe](#)
- ◆ IPPF's guide, [Sustainable Development Goals: A SRHR CSO guide for national implementation](#)
- ◆ UNFPA and WHO's [Sexuality Education Policy Brief No. 1](#) (what is sexuality education?)
- ◆ UNFPA and WHO's [Sexuality Education Policy Brief No. 2](#) (what is the impact of sexuality education?)
- ◆ UNFPA's [Evaluation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education Programmes](#), focusing on gender and empowerment outcomes
- ◆ UNFPA's [Operational Guidance for Comprehensive Sexuality Education](#)
- ◆ The UK Sex Education Forum's brief on the evidence for comprehensive sexuality education, [SRE - the evidence](#)
- ◆ Rutgers' [Explore: monitoring and evaluation and research in SRHR Programmes for Young People](#)
- ◆ [Demographic and Health Surveys](#) and the [Stat Compiler](#)
- ◆ [Sexual Rights Database](#)
- ◆ [Guttmacher Institute](#)'s data on teens and adolescents' sexual and reproductive health and rights, including sexuality education
- ◆ Guttmacher Institute and IPPF's [Demystifying Data](#)
- ◆ [Inside and Out: Comprehensive Sexuality Education Assessment Tool](#) by IPPF which can assess CSE in and out of school

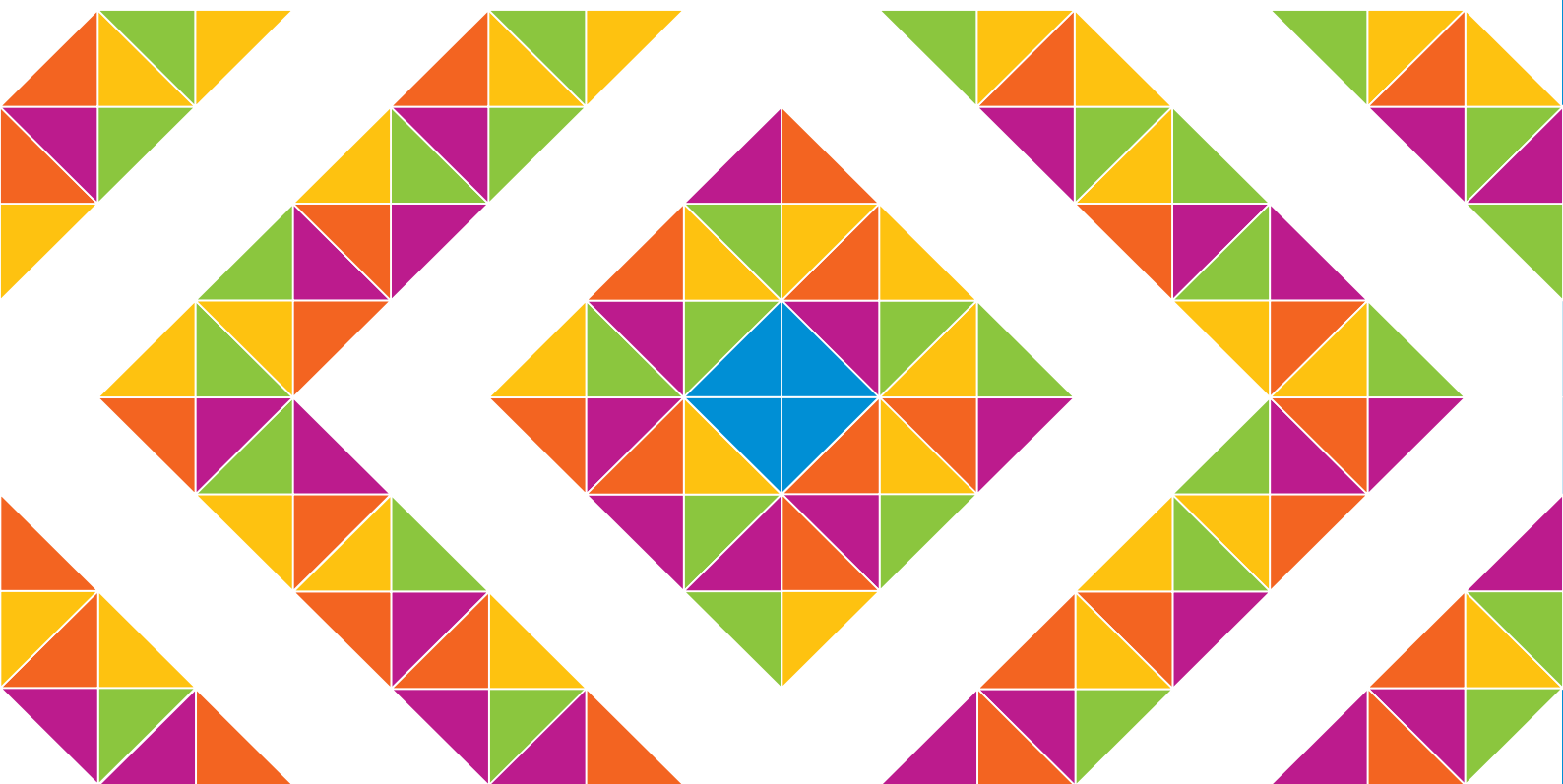
Global Guidelines on CSE

- ◆ [United Nations International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education \(2009\)](#)
- ◆ [WHO's Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe](#)

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