



C-Fam | FACT SHEET

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Evidence of Systemic and Unlawful Promotion of Comprehensive Sexuality Education by UN Secretariat, Agencies, and Other UN Entities

By C-Fam Staff

INTRODUCTION

At the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994, UN member states agreed to provide "age-appropriate sex education" with "appropriate direction and guidance from parents and legal guardians." Since then, the landscape has changed significantly, with a concentrated effort by a group of mostly wealthy Western countries to gain acceptance of "comprehensive sexuality education" (CSE). This effort has been largely unsuccessful and met with opposition from the local to the international level. Nevertheless, the UN system has thrown its weight behind the effort to make CSE not only available but mandatory and ubiquitous in every country of the world.

The primary focus of this fact sheet is not to address the controversial aspects of CSE, nor many of the terms that have been proposed in negotiations to replace CSE, many of which contain caveats that sex education should be age-appropriate, culturally relevant, and conducted with the knowledge and approval of parents or guardians. It focuses on the UN's promotion of "CSE" despite the clear lack of consensus among member states on such issues.

UN Agencies Promoting CSE

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The major UN agency promoting CSE is UNESCO, the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, which has taken the lead in creating standards for CSE curricula. However, the guidance coming from UNESCO is frequently produced in collaboration with other agencies, particularly UNICEF, UNFPA, UNAIDS, UN Women, and the World Health Organization (WHO). The following examples are listed by the lead organization, but many are produced jointly:

UNESCO



Guidance Document for the Implementation of Young People's Sexual Rights developed by IPPF with support from UNESCO

UNESCO

Harnessing technology for effective Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) delivery (2025) – UNESCO is working to scale up CSE programming around the world by making CSE courses accessible online, to both instructors and youth. "A capacity building meeting was held in Dodoma from March 3rd to 6th, 2025, aimed at [empowering higher learning institutional ICT officers responsible for managing the CSE Online Course](#), enhancing their ability to effectively oversee and administer the program [...] Additionally, CSE administrators from 24 Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions (HTEIs) were in attendance, underscoring the significance of the gathering."¹

A snapshot on the Global Partnership Forum on Comprehensive sexuality education (2024) – "The Global Partnership Forum on comprehensive sexuality education (or CSE)² was launched in 2021 and counts over 70 cross-sector Organizations, across five continents including International Planned Parenthood Federation, coming together in solidarity to promote, progress and protect CSE as an educational foundation to healthy, happy and thriving lives and societies [...] Co-convened by UNESCO and UNFPA with support from the governments of Norway and Sweden, the Forum provides a structured platform for strengthened collaboration, the sharing of information and good practices, identifying gaps in research, enhancing youth leadership, and informing evidence-based policies and programmes."³

Comprehensive sexuality education: For healthy, informed and empowered learners (2024) – "Comprehensive sexuality education - or the many other ways this may be referred to - is a [curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality](#) [...] It reinforces healthy and positive values about bodies, puberty, relationships, sex and family life." Instead of

sharing information on human sexuality rooted in responsibility, respect, and neutral anatomical facts, [CSE materials reflect and promote value judgments on controversial topics](#), including encouraging children to question their sexual orientation, develop a positive view of homosexuality, masturbation, and engage in sexual experimentation outside the context of marriage.⁴

40 million young people in Sub-Saharan Africa to enhance their knowledge on CSE (2024) – "On 15th June 2023 in Zanzibar, UNESCO through the Our Rights Our Lives Our Future (O3) Programme brought together more than 125 delegates from 33 Sub-Saharan African countries including Government officials from selected countries, funding partners, civil society organizations, and Youth representatives in the launch of the second phase of the O3 Programme. O3 phase two is planning to [provide 44 million adolescents and young people](#) with high-quality, accurate, culturally, and rights-based education on health and well-being, as well as education on preventing violence in schools."⁵ The O3 Programme⁶ is a UNESCO initiative aimed at "supporting countries to deliver [comprehensive sexuality education for adolescents and young people in sub-Saharan Africa](#)."

Comprehensive sexuality education: an overview of the international systematic review evidence (2024) – "Young people have a right to high quality comprehensive sexuality education."⁷

UNESCO Bangkok Social Media Post About CSE (2024) – On June 7, 2024, UNESCO Bangkok tweeted, "[Comprehensive sexuality education \(CSE\) can empower youth](#) to develop respectful social & intimate relationships. [BUT it's not a mandatory subject in many countries](#). What's your experience with CSE?"⁸

Learning for Lasting Peace (2024) – At a UNESCO event, *Learning for Lasting Peace*, Christopher Castle, Director of the Division for Peace and Sustainable Development at UNESCO, said the following about a UN Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development: "In the end there were some pleasant surprises including the fact that for the [very first time we saw an acknowledgement of comprehensive sexuality education being agreed](#) without objection by all of these member states[...]what does that have to do with peace? Well, [if you are a young person that is really important for better relationships with each other](#) and moving

forward making safer better choices in life".⁹

Global Partnership Forum on Comprehensive sexuality education (2024) – "The Global Partnership Forum on comprehensive sexuality education (or CSE) [co-convened by UNESCO and UNFPA] was launched in 2021 and [counts over 60 cross-sector organizations](#), across five continents, coming together in solidarity to [promote, progress and protect CSE](#) as an educational foundation to healthy, happy and thriving lives and societies." In March 2024, the Forum hosted a webinar about the launch of the [Comprehensive Sexuality Education Academy](#), an online program teaching adolescents aged 15-24 from all over the world about sexuality education, sexual health and wellbeing, and how to advocate for it in their respective countries.¹⁰ UNESCO is developing this project [together with Planned Parenthood Association in Ghana](#), among others pro-abortion groups.

Draft Revised 1974 Recommendation Concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation, and Peace and Education Relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (2023) – "All learners should be empowered through comprehensive sexuality education that is non-discriminatory, evidence-based, scientifically accurate, relevant to cultural contexts, and age-appropriate. This focuses on building the knowledge of reproductive health and infection prevention, as well as the cognitive, social and emotional, and behavioural skills for healthy, respectful and equitable relationships."¹¹

The journey towards comprehensive sexuality education: Global status report (2021) – "Three-quarters of countries responding to the 2019-2020 Survey self-report that 'HIV&AIDS/STIs' is 'extensively' included in their secondary education curriculum. Additionally, the topic of 'Puberty' was reported to have been 'extensively' included by 67 per cent of countries. Slightly more than 55 per cent of countries also referred to the following topics as 'extensively' included in their secondary curriculum: gender and gender norms, pregnancy and birth, love and relationships and sexual abuse/violence. The topics that are included to a lesser extent were 'access to safe abortion', 'sexual orientation and gender identity', and 'online media and technology'.¹²

International technical guidance on sexuality education: An evidence-informed approach (Revised edition) (2018) – This guidance "was developed to [assist education, health and other relevant authorities](#) in the development and implementation of school- based and [out-of-school comprehensive sexuality](#)

[education programmes and materials](#). It is immediately relevant for government education ministers and their professional staff, including curriculum developers, school principals and teachers. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), youth workers and young people can also use the document as an advocacy or accountability tool, for example by sharing it with decision-makers as a guide to best practices and/or for its integration within broader agendas, such as the SDGs. The Guidance is also useful for anyone involved in the design, delivery and evaluation of sexuality education programmes both in and out of school, including stakeholders working on quality education, sexual and reproductive health (SRH), adolescent health and/or gender equality, among other issues."¹³

UNICEF

UNICEF

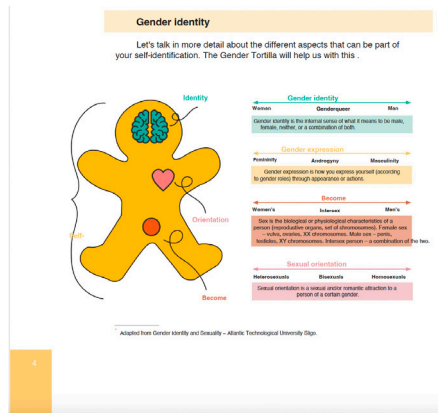
Your Guide to Adulthood Without Secrets (2024) – In January 2024, UNICEF launched several CSE brochures¹⁴ for children of various age groups in Ukraine. Instead of sharing information on human sexuality rooted in responsibility, respect, and neutral anatomical facts, these materials reflect and promote value judgments on controversial topics, including encouraging children to question their sexual orientation, develop a positive view of homosexuality, masturbation, and engage in sexual experimentation outside the context of marriage. The examples below represent the English translation of the materials originally published in Ukrainian.

UNICEF Brochure for Ages 15-18¹⁵:

["An important aspect of your sexuality is your sexual orientation](#), which is your romantic and/or sexual attraction to people of a certain gender. Some people are attracted to people of the opposite gender, and they are heterosexual. Some people are attracted to people of the same gender, and they are homosexual (gays and lesbians)." (Page 6)

"LGBTIQ+ is an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer, and the ["+" sign means that the spectrum of sexuality and identity is constantly expanding](#). It is normal to feel sympathy or attraction to members of your own or the opposite sex, but it is also normal not to feel attraction." (Page 6)

["Masturbation is perfectly acceptable](#) in relationships, both alone and with partners. [It is part of healthy sexual behavior](#). Although the topic of masturbation may be surrounded by



Translated Graphic from UNICEF brochure for Ages 15-18, promoting that gender identity and sexual orientation exist on a spectrum.



Graphic from UNICEF brochure for Ages 15-18, gender identity section, page 6

myths, it is actually a way to relieve stress, satisfy sexual arousal, and explore your body, sexuality, and desires." (Page 36)

The following excerpts encourage children to experiment sexual practices, reflect on their sexual preferences, and discuss those with their sexual partner outside the context of a committed relationship, much less marriage:

"Only through experiments can you understand what really brings pleasure to you and your partner." (Page 35)

"Ask yourself which sexual practices you like and which you don't. Be sure to share your thoughts with your partner and ask him/her to tell you about his/her own preferences!" (Page 36)

Seeking to normalize homosexual activity, the excerpt below lists "anal sex" as just another type of sexual acts that children should be familiar with:

"sex happens.. oral – stimulation of the genitals with the tongue or lips, vaginal – involves penetration of the vagina with a penis, fingers, or sex toys; anal – during which the penis penetrates the anus, fingers or sex toys." (Page 36)

UNICEF Brochure for Ages 10-14¹⁶:

"Sexuality is your thoughts, on identity, sexual orientation, sex, intimacy fantasies, desires, values, behaviors, roles, and relationships." (Page 18)

"Some people are clear about their sexual orientation before they enter a relationship, while others come to terms with it over time. Sometimes you may not fully understand it until you are an adult." (Page 19)

"It is important to remember that sexual orientation cannot be a cause for humiliation, bullying or shame. And phrases like "traditional or non-traditional orientation" are incorrect. You cannot point out to people their "rightness" or "wrongness". All types of sexual orientation are natural." (Page 19)

The following excerpts encourage children to think about their preferred sexual practices and discuss those with their sexual partner outside the context of marriage, and develop a positive view of masturbation:

"Foreplay and caressing touch help you relax, feel comfortable, and increase sexual arousal. [...] In order to understand what

caressing you and your partner like, you need to talk about it." (Page 28)

"Although the topic of masturbation may be surrounded by myths, in fact it is one of the ways to relieve stress, quench sexual arousal, explore one's own body, sexuality and desires." (Page 28)



Express yourself. Gender identity

Color the picture. How can boys and girls express themselves differently?



Graphic from UNICEF brochure for Ages 6-9 , gender identity section, page 20

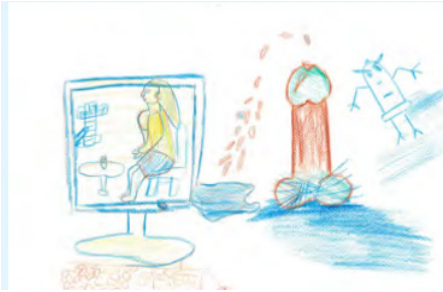
Delivering With and For Adolescent Girls: Five game-changing priorities (2024) – "Evidence-based interventions that can save girls' lives, and promote their health and well-being, include [...] comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) linked to sexual reproductive and health rights services, using evidence-based curricula."¹⁷

A synthesis of what we know works to prevent and respond to child marriage (2024) – There is a strong need to adapt, test and implement culturally relevant and context appropriate CSE interventions which promote rights, equality and critical thinking in diverse socio-cultural contexts.¹⁸

What to teach for foundational education for health and well-being (2024) – This is a joint guidance developed by UNICEF and UNFPA to "[support primary school-aged children](#) to thrive through foundational education for health and well-being." The brief mentions [CSE implementation in various countries and highlights](#) "Quebec's primary school sexuality education [which] aims to foster a deeper self-awareness among learners, [prompt reflection on gender roles and stereotypes](#)." The guideline also mentioned "Ecuador's Ministry of Education, [which] in collaboration with UNFPA and UNESCO, developed a tool on Curricular Opportunities for Comprehensive Sexuality Education...For older primary school students, the programme [expands on these topics and addresses how culture, religion and society influence understandings of sexuality](#)."¹⁹

What is foundational education for health and well-being? (2024) – "Foundational education for health and well-being (FEHW) refers to the building blocks of knowledge, attitudes and skills that enable younger learners to navigate their current and future health and well-being needs... covers a variety of existing education programmes promoting health and well-being at primary schools (see box on page 6). Such programmes include life-skills education, social and emotional learning, [comprehensive sexuality education](#)..."²⁰

Delivering With and For Adolescent Girls: Five game-changing priorities (2024) – "Evidence-based interventions that can save girls' lives, and promote their health and well-being, include [...] [comprehensive sexuality education](#) (CSE) linked to sexual reproductive and health rights services, using evidence-based curricula."²¹



2022 Global Annual Report - Sustaining the Gains in the Polycrisis Era (2023) – "Reaching the most marginalized adolescent girls through empowerment programmes: The [Global Programme continued its efforts to empower the most marginalized adolescent girls](#) through lifeskills, [comprehensive sexuality education](#) and asset-building programmes. This intensive support ensures that girls gain the skills, knowledge and assets needed to achieve bodily autonomy, decision-making power and safe transitions to adulthood."²²



Review of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Thailand - "This review of comprehensive sexuality education (CSE1) in Thai educational institutions collected data from students, teachers, guardians, school directors and national policy advocacy stakeholders. Standard international data collection tools were used, with the hope that important information could be gathered to guide the development of school-based CSE implementation in Thailand."²³

Image from UNICEF's Review of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Thailand, page 15

"Many [students hold attitudes that reject gender equality and sexual rights](#),"

"Although diverse topics are covered in the CSE curriculum, many institutions teach about sexuality from a point of view that emphasizes the negative consequences of sex and does not cover positive aspects or promote students' analytic and critical-thinking skills related to sexuality. Topics related to the prevention of teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and HIV, as well as sexual anatomy and development are emphasized most, while topics related to gender, sexual rights and citizenship; [sexual and gender diversity](#); gender inequality; [safe abortion; safe sex for same-sex couples](#); and bullying [are less often taught](#)."



Let's talk about it Podcast: Take a look – the mirror exercise

5mins

Laaha Program – Laaha²⁴, created with the support of UNICEF, is an online platform that shares information on "sexual taboos" to combat "gender-based violence" and raise awareness about sexual and reproductive health". Laaha content, while not limited to parent-child instruction, is accessible to children of any age group. The examples below showcase Laaha encouraging girls to touch their intimate body parts to learn about their bodies

Source: Laaha website



Source: Laaha website



Foreplay is the word for activities before sex, such as kissing and cuddling. **Foreplay** is important because it helps you relax. Think of it as a warm-up to the main event. If sex hurts, take a break and try again. If it really hurts, stop and make an appointment with your gynecologist.

Foreplay Tips:

- Cuddle and talk to your partner about the activities you want to engage in.
- Take a bath or a shower together.

Source: Laaha website

UN Women

and learn about foreplay. Sharing such sensitive information without age-appropriate safeguards and parental oversight could be misused by children and lead to psychological harm and the normalization of early sexual activity.

1. Let's talk about it Podcast: Take a look - the mirror exercise²⁵

"Spread your knees apart and hold the mirror in front of your vulva and vagina"

"Gently use your fingers to find where the most sensitive part of your vulva is. This is most likely your clitoris"

2. Common questions about having sex²⁶

"Foreplay is the word for activities before sex, such as kissing and cuddling. Foreplay is important because it helps you relax. Think of it as a warm-up to the main event. If sex hurts, take a break and try again. If it really hurts, stop and make an appointment with your gynecologist."

Education Cannot Wait: Gender Policy and Accountability Framework 2019-2021 – Education Cannot Wait is a UN fund to provide children in crisis and humanitarian situations with education. While this is a laudable goal, the ECW gender policy instructs partners to use certain materials in implementation, including the 2018 UNESCO International Guidance on Sexuality Education (see above under UNESCO).²⁷

UN Women

Women's Rights in Review 30 Years After Beijing (2025) –

"Health achievements include improvements in meeting family planning needs with modern contraceptive methods and declines in births among adolescent girls, supported by comprehensive sexuality education."²⁸

Young feminist leadership at CSW69: Mobilizing a generation for gender equality, 30 years after the Beijing Platform for Action (2025) – "At the 'Rights, Equality and Empowerment for All Girls' conversation circle, young leaders presented clear, direct calls to action. These included prioritizing comprehensive sexuality education as a means of preventing sexual violence, proactive measures against technology-facilitated gender-based violence, and structured investments in digital literacy and economic empowerment."²⁹

Women's rights then and now: "Women's voices are about transformations" - Interview with Roberta Clarke (2025) – In a story featured on the UN Women website, former UN staff member Roberta Clarke mentioned that "The Beijing Platform for Action reiterated women's reproductive rights, sexual and reproductive rights, and the [right of children to comprehensive sexuality education](#) in schools."³⁰ However, the Beijing Platform for Action does not mention comprehensive sexuality education at all, leave alone enshrining a right to access such an education.

Supporting displaced adolescent boys and male youth in all their diversity who are survivors or at risk of sexual exploitation (2024) – "The educational sessions should include: [comprehensive sexuality education that is SOGIE inclusive](#), including safe sex, condom use, and safe internet use; human rights, [human sexuality](#), gender equality, puberty, relationships, and sexual and reproductive health and rights."³¹

Policy Debrief Accelerating Progress Toward Gender Equality and Women Empowerment The Status of Gender Equality in East and Southern Africa (2024) – "Most countries have adopted comprehensive sexuality education (CSE). However, [only some aligned CSE to international standards](#) and fully integrated it in primary and secondary schools."³²

A call to invest in prevention from the UN Women Civil Society Advisory Group (2023) – "The main victims of gender-based violence are women in their diversity. It is based on the patriarchal and sexist system of our society, which is why it is necessary that in our countries, in addition to investing in care, we pay the corresponding attention to investing in prevention, developing education strategies with a gender focus, including [comprehensive sexual education, which will allow us to question the socio-cultural patterns marked by sexism, and multiple discriminations](#)."³³

Investing in adolescent girls' and young women's leadership and voice in the HIV response: Case studies and experiences (2023) – "Over several months, [adolescent girls and young women met regularly with established women leaders to openly discuss](#) the issues that affect them. Topics included access to health services, sexual and reproductive health and rights, [comprehensive sexuality education](#), tackling harmful gender norms and practices, gender-based violence, HIV-related stigma and discrimination, feminist leadership and promoting the rights of adolescent girls and young women in the HIV response."³⁴

Seven ways to change the world (2021) – "The upcoming Generation Equality Forum in Paris is discussing key solutions, such as [expanding comprehensive sexuality education](#) and increasing the quality of and access to contraceptive services for millions more adolescent girls and women by 2026. The Action Coalition on Bodily Autonomy and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights is also focused on ensuring that, in five years' time, 50 million more adolescent girls and women live in jurisdictions where they can access safe and legal abortion."³⁵

Statement by UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka for International Youth Day (2019) – "[Comprehensive sexuality education is crucial for girls' ability to understand their bodies](#) and make decisions about their health care, including their sexual and reproductive health."³⁶

Remarks by UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka at the High-Level Ministerial Breakfast Event on the Role of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the Economic Empowerment of Women (2017) – "Schools and community activities that involve young people are important platforms for us to implement solutions. [Comprehensive sexuality education is critical](#). The extent to which we have not been able to have this universally embraced by Member States presents a challenge."³⁷

World Health Organization (WHO)

World Health Organization (WHO)

WHO guideline on preventing early pregnancy and poor reproductive outcomes among adolescents in low- and middle-income countries (2025) – The framework advances a vision of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) for young people that promotes controversial ideas and norm changes inconsistent with what governments have agreed to, including access to sexual education. The report mentions that "the strong recommendation from the 2011 edition of the guideline to 'Offer interventions that combine curriculum-based sexuality education with contraceptive promotion to adolescents, in order to reduce pregnancy rates' still stands, as do the United Nations' International technical guidance on sexuality education and International technical and programmatic guidance on out-of-school comprehensive sexuality education."³⁸

Comprehensive Sexuality Education Q&A (2023)

– "[Abstinence-only programmes](#) – which instruct young people to not have sex outside of marriage – [are ineffective](#) in

preventing early sexual activity and risk-taking behaviour, and potentially harmful to young people's sexual and reproductive health[...] Sexuality education equips children and young people with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that help them to protect their health, develop respectful social and sexual relationships, make responsible choices and understand and protect the rights of others."³⁹

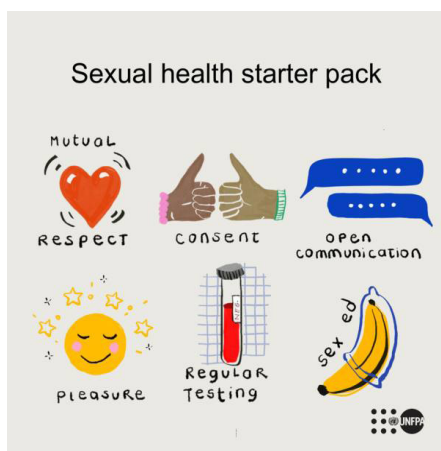
WHO pledges extensive commitments towards women's empowerment and health (2021) – "WHO also committed to investing in the evidence base for sexual and reproductive health and rights, [including delivering comprehensive sexuality education outside school settings](#); improving access to quality and rights-based family planning in 14 middle-income countries ; supporting 25 countries in increasing adolescents' access to and use of contraception; disseminating updated guidelines on safe abortion; and building knowledge among adolescents of their entitlements and ability to advocate for their needs."⁴⁰

WHO Stands Up for the Right to Health (2018) – "States have an obligation under human rights law to provide information and education to adolescents. [CSE is part of the core obligations of states to uphold the right to sexual and reproductive health](#), which means that it is considered one of the basic minimum actions states must take to give meaning to this right. Based on the evidence and the human rights rationale, WHO recommends the provision of age-appropriate, scientifically-accurate comprehensive sexuality education within and outside schools."⁴¹

WHO Manual on Sexual health, Human Rights and the Law (2015) – "Harmonizing laws with human rights standards can foster the promotion of sexual health across and within various populations, while the negative impact of laws that are in contradiction with human rights standards has been increasingly documented. For example, [laws that foster the dissemination of objective, comprehensive sexuality information](#), if implemented for all, [contribute to people's knowledge](#) of what protects or damages their sexual health, including where and how to seek further information, counselling and treatment if needed."⁴²

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

UNFPA and Partners Drive Strategic Shift in Women's Health with Launch of Global WomenX Hub in Nairobi (2025) – "UNFPA calls for the realization of reproductive rights for all and



UNFPA Facebook page

[supports access to a wide range of sexual and reproductive health services](#), including voluntary family planning, quality maternal health care and [comprehensive sexuality education](#)."⁴³

10 Myths and Truths About Comprehensive Sexuality Education (2024) – "UNFPA [works with governments](#) around the world to [provide comprehensive education both in and outside of schools](#) through community-based training and outreach."⁴⁴

Partnering for education: How Norway's commitment to young people helps empower the most left behind (2024) – "Yet one critical aspect is still falling through the cracks of this global achievement: [Comprehensive sexuality education is missing from curricula in many countries](#)...Through a global programme spanning twelve countries across five continents and with support from Norway and Spain, UNFPA delivers locally-tailored comprehensive sexuality education interventions that address the needs in particular of refugees, LGBTQI+ youth, young people living with HIV, indigenous youth, and young people living with a disability."⁴⁵

COUNTRY CASE STUDIES ON UNFPA'S GLOBAL PROGRAMME ON OUT-OF-SCHOOL CSE (2024) – "UNFPA has since 2019 led the programme 'Comprehensive Sexuality Education for Out-of-school Young People: Reaching Those Most Left Behind', with the aim of empowering adolescents and youth from specific groups left behind with the information and skills they need to make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health and rights. The programme is funded by the governments of Norway and Spain, and started its second phase in 2022. The programme implementation takes place in a total of 12 countries – Colombia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Iran, Malawi, Moldova, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Palestine, Philippines and Tunisia."

Empowering Adolescent Girls Through Non-Formal Education: A comparative analysis of comprehensive sexuality education, life skills education and protective asset-building approaches (2022) – "Somewhat similar to the asset-building approach, comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) is integral to the right to education. [CSE is both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights](#), such as the right to health, the right to information, and sexual and reproductive health...UNFPA's programmes on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) for out of school populations also recognize the need for reaching young people, including girls, with CSE in a range of settings and through diverse platforms."⁴⁶

SAMPLE CONSOLIDATED LIST OF SEXUAL PRACTICES (Note to facilitator:

Do not add things the participants do not mention.)

- Hugging?
- Kissing?
- Writing love letters, sexual phone text messages, chat, or emails?
- Exchanging or sharing clothes?
- Thinking or fantasizing about sex?
- Discussing sexual fantasies with someone in person or over phone, internet, SMS or chat?
- Giving and/or receiving massage?
- Caressing breasts?
- Oral sex - mouth on penis X
- Oral sex - mouth on penis with condom?
- Oral sex - mouth to vulva, vagina, clitoris X
- Oral sex - mouth to vulva, vagina, clitoris using a cut opened condom or barrier as a protective covering?
- Sucking or licking body parts other than vagina, penis, anus?
- Wearing sexy clothes?
- Making erotic eye contact?
- Undressing in front of a sexual partner?
- Rubbing bodies with clothes on?
- Rubbing bodies without clothes on?
- Masturbating oneself without condom or barrier?
- Masturbating a partner without condom or barrier?
- Masturbating oneself with condom or barrier?
- Masturbating a partner with condom or barrier?
- Anal sex with condom?
- Anal sex without condom X
- Vaginal sexual intercourse with condom?
- Vaginal sexual intercourse without condom X
- Rubbing the penis between the breasts, thighs, armpits, behind knee?
- Sexy dancing?
- Watching pornography or erotica (alone or with others)?
- Showering or bathing together?
- Fingering the vagina or anus (with or without condom or barrier)?
- Inserting objects into the vagina: plastic penis, dildo, vibrator, other objects (with or without condom; with or without sharing same object with partner)? X

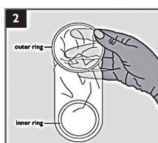
Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) For Out of School People in Malawi

WORKBOOK INFORMATION: HOW TO USE A FEMALE CONDOM

Follow these steps to use a female condom:

1. Check the expiry date on the package. Squeeze the condom package and make sure there is still air in it. If there is no air, there is a hole in the package. If it is too old or has no air in it, don't use it.
2. When you are ready to insert the condom (up to 8 hours before sex), carefully open the package and remove the condom. Tear the package at the notch on the top right – see picture 1. Do not open the package with your teeth or a sharp object like a knife or scissors.

The female condom is a long polyurethane bag with two rings. The outer ring is attached to the edge that opens. The inner ring is loose inside the bag. The outer ring will cover the area around the opening of the vagina. The inner ring is used for insertion and to help hold the condom in place during intercourse. See picture 2 below.



3. Hold the condom with the open end hanging down and squeeze the inner ring at the closed end with two fingers so it becomes long and narrow or turns into a figure eight. See picture 3.



4. Choose a comfortable position – raise one leg, sit or lie down. See picture 4.



Comprehensive Sexuality Education Facilitators Manual for Out of School Young People in Zimbabwe

My Body Is My Own: State of World Population (2021) – "Laws can help support bodily autonomy by, for example, guaranteeing everyone's access to sexual and reproductive health services, [mandating schools to provide comprehensive sexuality education](#) and requiring informed consent in the provision of health care."⁴⁷

International Technical and Programmatic Guidance on Out-of-School Comprehensive Sexuality Education – Published in 2020 in collaboration with UNESCO, UNICEF, and WHO, among other UN Agencies, the guidance⁴⁸ continues to inform and shape CSE curricula in non-traditional learning settings. By its own admission, the guidance includes controversial topics known not to be "acceptable in school settings," as well as a "rights-based approach" to teaching sexuality education. The right-based approach is rooted in moral relativism, presenting all sexual behaviors or identities as equally valid personal choice. The target audience includes: "civil-society or community-based organizations, youth centres or youth clubs, health clinics, summer camps, religious institutions or faith-based organizations, at school after hours [...] jails, detention centres [...] [and] refugee camps or other shelters where people seek humanitarian support."⁴⁹

"Out-of-school CSE can also include challenging topics and promote a rights-based approach rooted in gender equality and empowerment in a way that may not always be feasible or acceptable in school settings." (Page 10)

["Sexual orientation should be seen as a continuum."](#) A person's orientation is not necessarily fixed and may change over the course of a lifetime. Some people do not choose to label themselves in any particular category." (Page 32)

Section on "young lesbian, gay and bisexual people, and other young men who have sex with men":

["Recruit facilitators with diverse identities:](#) If the main facilitator is not a member of the LGBTQ+ community, it is strongly recommended to have a co-facilitator who is." (Page 33)

["Consult local or national groups for transgender people,](#) including children and young people: Where such groups exist, they will be able to provide valuable input on the programme and the most appropriate ways of reaching young people who are transgender." (Page 35)

"When talking about sexual and reproductive anatomy, label diagrams inclusively: Diagrams should not be labelled as male and female, and body parts should not be assigned to one gender." (Page 35)

Section on Young People who sell sex:

"Integrate CSE for young people who sell sex into community empowerment approaches: This helps to address their stigmatization and marginalization, and is also an opportunity to foster collective empowerment." (Page 42)

What is comprehensive sexuality education? A life saver. (2019) – This page displays a picture of a youth activist celebrating at the 2019 Nairobi Summit hosted by UNFPA. She is holding up a green bandana, a symbol of the pro-abortion movement in Central and South America. "Twenty-five years [after ICPD], participants at the Nairobi Summit are again calling for action to inform young people of their reproductive health and rights. Already, dozens of Summit attendees have committed to strengthening comprehensive sexuality education for young people, either through school curricula or other means."⁵⁰

International technical guidance on sexuality education (2018) – The guidance⁵¹ continues to serve as one of the leading UN-system documents on CSE. It defines CSE as a curriculum that moves beyond teaching young people about human anatomy and avoiding sexual diseases to "teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality." The guidance sets out several learning objectives for different age groups:

Ages 5-8: "Reflect on how they feel about their biological sex and gender (skill)." (Page 50)

Ages 9-12: "Explain how someone's gender identity may not match their biological sex (knowledge);" (Page 50)

"Describe ways that human beings feel pleasure from physical contact (e.g. kissing, touching, caressing, sexual contact) throughout their life (knowledge);" (Page 70)

"Acknowledge that masturbation does not cause physical or emotional harm but should be done in private (knowledge)." (Page 71)

Ages 12-15: "Recognize that puberty may be particularly challenging for some children, particularly those who are [gender non-conforming](#), [transgender](#) or intersex (knowledge);" (Page 67)

Ages 15-18+: "Analyze social norms that contribute to homophobia and transphobia and their consequences (knowledge);" (Page 50)

UN Agency-Led Review Conferences: The Nairobi Summit and Generation Equality Forum

UN Agency-Led Review Conferences: The Nairobi Summit and Generation Equality Forum

In recent years, conferences reviewing the outcomes of major consensus agreements such as the ICPD in 1994 and the Beijing women's conference in 1995 have shifted away from being held under the auspices of the General Assembly at its headquarters and producing a consensus outcome. This format had largely prevented normative shifts on controversial issues away from the original agreements. Instead, the twenty-fifth anniversary observances of Cairo and Beijing were coordinated by UNFPA and UN Women respectively, were held outside UN headquarters, and produced no consensus document, but rather a collection of pledges from countries and other stakeholders, many of which pertained to issues like CSE which would never have enjoyed consensus.

The 2019 Nairobi Summit commemorating ICPD issued a statement that did not explicitly mention the phrase "comprehensive sexuality education," but included reference to "sexual and reproductive health and rights" (SRHR), which have never been agreed in any global context, with a footnote suggesting "this could be further guided by the expanded definition of SRHR interventions, as proposed in the Report of the Guttmacher/Lancet Commission on sexual and reproductive health and rights," which includes CSE.⁵²

The 2018 Report of a Guttmacher/Lancet Commission observed how regional reviews of ICPD and Beijing progressed further than the 2030 Agenda in explicitly calling for abortion and LGBT rights and included non-internationally agreed language on sexual orientation, gender identity, comprehensive sexuality education, and other controversial subjects, without adequate caveats or qualification with regard to sovereignty, parental rights, culture, religion, and tradition, as in the ICPD.⁵³

In 2021, the 1995 Beijing conference was commemorated by two

events held in Mexico and France called the "Generation Equality Forum." As with Nairobi, the events were tightly curated and described as a "champions-only space" by activists hoping to see further promotion of CSE.⁵⁴

One of its official "action coalitions" focused on bodily autonomy and SRHR, and it issued a blueprint which had as one of its targets "Increase delivery of comprehensive sexuality education in and out of school reaching 50 million more children, adolescents, and youth by 2026."⁵⁵

UN Treaty Body Promotion of CSE

UN Treaty Body Promotion of CSE

In their concluding observations to States party to human rights conventions, the treaty monitoring bodies are becoming increasingly aggressive in promoting CSE in countries that have ratified their respective treaties. This is despite the fact that none of the treaties mention CSE in their text, and any attempt to include such a reference would have been strongly rejected by the UN Member States who negotiated the treaty texts in the first place.

Examples of CSE promotion by treaty bodies include the following:

Human Rights Committee (monitoring ICCPR):

Review of Serbia, 2024: "Continue combating stereotypes about, and negative attitudes towards, persons on the basis of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, including through public information campaigns and sex education programmes in schools that provide students with full, accurate and age-appropriate information on sexuality and different gender identities."⁵⁶

Review of Equatorial Guinea, 2019: "Ensure full access to sexual and reproductive health services and comprehensive sexuality education for men, women, boys and girls throughout the country, including in rural and remote areas."⁵⁷

Review of Mexico, 2019: "Ensure unimpeded access to sexual and reproductive health services and to holistic, evidence-based sexuality education in order to raise awareness among men, women, boys and girls throughout the country, including in remote, rural areas."⁵⁸

Review of Guatemala, 2018: "Ensure unimpeded access to sexual

and reproductive health services, emergency contraceptives and comprehensive sex education for men, women, boys and girls throughout the country."⁵⁹

**Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
(monitoring CESCR):**

Review of Rwanda, 2025: "Continue its efforts to enable adolescents to independently seek sexual and reproductive health information and services and take other necessary measures to improve access to contraception and to comprehensive and age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health education for girls and boys in primary and secondary schools;"⁶⁰

Review of Chad, 2023: "The Committee recommends that the State party improve sexual and reproductive health education for girls and boys in primary and secondary schools, so that it is comprehensive and age-appropriate. It also recommends that it ensure the availability and accessibility of sexual and reproductive health services, such as access to affordable, safe and effective contraception and to emergency contraceptives, including for adolescents, particularly in remote areas."⁶¹

Review of Denmark, 2019: "The Committee recommends that the State party provide age-appropriate, evidence-based, scientifically accurate comprehensive education for all on sexual and reproductive health and sexuality, including on consent in sexual relations. It also recommends that adequate pedagogical programmes for their teaching be developed."⁶²

Review of the Republic of Serbia, 2014: "The Committee recommends that the State party intensify its measures to increase the budgetary allocations to the health sector, ensure that disadvantaged individuals have a health card so that they can have access to health care, and extend health services to rural areas. The State party should also continue to address the spread of HIV/AIDS by promoting adolescent health and providing health counselling and services to the general public, provide for comprehensive sexuality education, and extend the network of mental health services for children while replacing institutional care with community-based support services."⁶³

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against
Women (monitoring CEDAW):**

Review of Ireland, 2025: "Integrate compulsory and age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and

rights into school curricula at all levels, including education on responsible sexual behaviour, modern contraception and sexual consent, and ensure that sex education is scientifically objective and regularly monitored and evaluated;"⁶⁴

Review of Philippines, 2023: "Strengthen the effective implementation of comprehensive sexuality education at all levels of education. while ensuring that it contains: (i) inclusive and accessible content on gender equality, including on women's rights and the harmful effects of gender-based violence against women and girls; (ii) age- appropriate sexuality education, paying particular attention to responsible sexual behaviour and the prevention of early pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases; and (iii) education on human rights and peace."⁶⁵

Review of Pakistan, 2020: "Develop and integrate into school curricula: (i) inclusive and accessible content on gender equality, including on women's rights, and positive portrayals of women in public life, and (ii) age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, including comprehensive sexuality education for adolescent girls and boys, with a particular emphasis on responsible sexual behaviour."⁶⁶

Review of Suriname, 2018: "Institutionalize mandatory, age-appropriate and comprehensive sexuality education, including education on responsible sexual behaviour and prevention of early pregnancy."⁶⁷

Review of Samoa, 2018: "Ensure the inclusion in school curricula of mandatory, universal, age- appropriate, comprehensive sexuality and reproductive health and rights education addressing the issues of power and responsible sexual behaviour, with special attention given to the prevention of early pregnancy, and strengthen continuing efforts towards awareness-raising in order to change cultural resistance to sexual and reproductive health education."⁶⁸

Committee on the Rights of the Child (monitoring CRC):

Review of Argentina, 2024: "Guarantee the effective implementation of Act No. 26159 on comprehensive sexual education and adopt a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health policy for children and ensure that it is part of the mandatory school curriculum and targeted at children, in accessible and confidential formats, including in Indigenous languages, with special attention to preventing early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections."⁶⁹

Review of Mauritius, 2023: "Empower adolescents to make responsible decisions on sexual relationships by ensuring, inter alia, that all girls and boys, including those who are out of school, receive confidential and child-friendly sexual and reproductive health information and services, including access to contraceptives."⁷⁰

Review of Côte d'Ivoire, 2019: "Ensure access to sexual and reproductive health information and services countrywide for girls and boys at schools, in particular access to modern contraception methods, including by implementing the National Programme on Comprehensive Sexuality Education and by ensuring that sexual and reproductive health education is part of the mandatory school curriculum."⁷¹

Review of Malawi, 2017: "Adopt a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescents and ensure that sexual and reproductive health education is part of the mandatory school curriculum both in public and private schools with special attention on preventing early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections."⁷²

Review of the United Kingdom, 2016: "Ensure that meaningful sexual and reproductive health education is part of the mandatory school curriculum for all schools, including academies, special schools and youth detention centres, in all areas of the State party. Such education should provide age-appropriate information on: confidential sexual and reproductive health-care services; contraceptives; the prevention of sexual abuse or exploitation, including sexual bullying; the support available in cases of such abuse and exploitation; and sexuality, including that of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children."⁷³

As is evident from the examples above, UN human rights treaty bodies have frequently and explicitly issued directives to sovereign Member States to institute mandatory CSE in and out of schools. Unlike non-governmental actors that might seek to lobby a national government to institute CSE, UN treaty bodies claim to do so with the authority of enforcing a binding agreement, referring to their concluding observations as "jurisprudence."

UN Special Procedures' Promotion of CSE

The special mandate holders who operate under the umbrella of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) are, like the treaty body members, independent experts who are not compensated for their work, but do receive support and staff to assist in carrying out their mandates. Like the treaty bodies, these experts have increasingly exceeded those mandates with impunity with regard to promoting CSE and urging countries make it mandatory.

UN mandate holders have also used their annual reports to promote CSE. These, like treaty body concluding observations, are frequently cited in the reports of various UN agencies. Some examples include:

A Compendium on Comprehensive Sexuality Education by the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health et al. (2023) – "Consistent with international human rights law standards, States should ensure the provision of comprehensive sexuality education inclusive of all individuals, UN Experts say. Comprehensive sexuality education should include information and support the development of skills that enable preventing sexually transmitted infections, early pregnancies, and sexual and gender-based violence. It should also promote human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, healthy and respectful relationships, well-being, empathy, respect, autonomy, consent and diversity."⁷⁴

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (2021) – "During the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of factors worsened adolescents' already limited access to sexual and reproductive health rights. [...] School closures have led to diminished access to interventions offered at school, such as menstrual education and provision of sanitary pads or comprehensive sexuality education, which was also forgotten in online education."⁷⁵

Report of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (2021) – "The provision and reception of comprehensive gender and sexuality education is legally protected under article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Independent Expert wishes to underline the importance of comprehensive gender and sexuality education to deconstruct stigma that lies as a powerful root cause for

violence and discrimination, to promote the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity under article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to deconstruct stereotypes about sex, sexuality and pleasure, and to prevent gender-based violence."⁷⁶

Special mandate holders often release joint statements promoting CSE including:

Joint statement by several special mandate holders for World Contraception Day (September 2021) – "On the World Contraception Day (26 September) and the International Safe Abortion Day (28 September), we call on States to live up to their legal obligations under current human rights standards, decriminalise abortion, repeal laws prohibiting access to emergency contraception and ensure respect for and protection and fulfilment of sexual and reproductive health rights, including through the systematic inclusion of comprehensive and scientifically based sexuality education in all school curricula, also in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic."⁷⁷

Joint statement by several special mandate holders for World Contraception Day (September 2020) – "In order to make this a reality, everyone must have access to scientifically based comprehensive sexuality education included in school curricula, as well as timely access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice. This includes unbiased and scientifically based information, the opportunity to make an informed decision, options for counselling, modern short- and long-acting contraceptives, and other methods such as emergency contraception."⁷⁸

Joint statement by UN human rights experts (2019) – "When it comes to adolescent girls, the lack of universal access to comprehensive sexuality education and contraceptive information and services and the persistent practice of child marriage in many parts of the world continue to lead to teenage pregnancy and the exclusion of girls from education and employment, hence limiting their enjoyment of many other rights."⁷⁹

Endnotes

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757 Third Ave, Suite 2102
New York, New York 10017

info@c-fam.org
www.c-fam.org

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