



Sex – sexuality education
Personal development for
the prevention of discrimination
and violence (SEXED)

**What? Why? When? Introduction to
Sex/Sexuality Education for Teachers**

by

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The opinions expressed in this work are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe.

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**one in five
un sur cinq**



What? Why? When? Introduction to Sex/Sexuality Education for Teachers

Brief description

This training unit provides materials for an introductory seminar for teachers teaching sex/sexuality education in primary school. In general this training unit should help educators understand the role of schools in teaching and empowering children on issues related to sex/sexuality, health and social and emotional development. Based on a comprehensive approach to sex and sexuality education, emphasis is given to both the theoretical framework and the methodology of teaching sex/sexuality education in primary school, the importance of age appropriate goals based on a universal dimension of sex/sexuality education and a teaching methodology conducive to the set goals, avoiding racism, victim blaming, and exclusion. This training unit also gives the opportunity for self-reflection, shaking off some taboos, and deconstructing social and cultural myths about gender roles, sex and sexuality that may inhibit teaching sex/sexuality education. The implementation of the materials takes two and a half hours.

Expected outcomes

- ✓ Participants will acquire knowledge about the purposes and importance of sex/sexuality education.
- ✓ Participants will develop competences necessary for successful implementation of gender, sex and sexuality education in the classroom.
- ✓ Participants will re-evaluate past beliefs on sex/sexuality education and gender stereotypes.
- ✓ Participants' teaching skills will be developed to create a safe environment that is conducive to participatory learning, in which all learners can teach each other through sharing, constructive dialogue, and feedback.
- ✓ Participants will accept that Human rights are for all human beings without any exceptions (A_HR_2).
- ✓ Participants will be ready to examine their behaviour, language use and body language (A_SELF_1).
- ✓ Participants will be able to discover facts about other people's beliefs and practices (S_DIV_2).
- ✓ Participants' ability to act against discrimination, stereotypes, and injustices will be developed (S_HR_3).
- ✓ Participants will understand some of the main concepts related to diversity like human rights, stereotypes, empathy, and inclusion (K_DIV_1).

Activities

	Duration	Methods used
Activity 1 Find someone who ...	20 minutes	Mingling, brief pair work
Activity 2 Sex/sexuality education	30 minutes	Drawing and describing
Activity 3 Sex-Ed! What is it? Why do we do it?	60 minutes	Debate
Activity 4 Bananas	30 minutes	Simulation and debriefing group discussion
Activity 5 Gender boxes	30 minutes	Posters in group work
Debriefing session: Once upon a time	20 minutes	Creative story writing

Background and context

The present training unit was piloted in Cyprus in an optional in-service training seminar attended by primary school teachers of learners aged 6 to 12. Optional in-service training seminars are offered throughout the school year for teachers. These seminars take place in the afternoon and last for three hours. A course consists of five such afternoons. This training unit was presented in one of these training afternoons for primary school teachers.

Activity 1: Find someone who...

Duration: 20 min

<p>Expected outcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Participants will get to know each other.✓ Participants will feel welcome and a positive atmosphere will be created.
<p>Methods/ techniques used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Mingling✓ Short pair work discussions
<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Task sheets (see Appendix 1)✓ Colourful markers
<p>Practical arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ The group will need space to move around✓ Everyone needs a pen and a task sheet
<p>Procedure</p> <p>Step 1 (10 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Using the “Find someone who...” task sheet, ask each participant to interact with others in the room and get them to sign their name on a square that applies to them.✓ Each participant can only sign one square per task sheet! <p>Step 2 (5 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ The first person to complete all the squares yells “safe sex or no sex!”✓ Everyone gets the floor to share with the whole group one interesting piece of information that they learned about someone else in the group.✓ If that was not too easy for everyone, participants are asked to see if they can fill the remaining squares during the breaks. <p>Step 3 - Debriefing (5 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ How did you find this activity?✓ Did any question embarrass you or make you feel strange? Why?✓ Can you think of any variations on this activity that you might be able to use with your learners?
<p>Tips for trainers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ It is important for everybody to feel comfortable but also be engaged in the seminar so it is vital to get to know each other and create a safe environment by setting some rules, making everybody feel comfortable and using a lot of different methods and techniques so as to keep the interest and the engagement of the participants high and cater for many different learning styles.✓ Be sure to go over who has signed which square in order to learn some interesting new facts about the group.✓ This activity allows participants to make some connections with each other that might normally take longer.

Activity 2: Sex and sexuality education

Duration: 30 min

Expected outcome

- ✓ Participants' awareness of the diversity of their backgrounds, beliefs and attitudes will be raised.
- ✓ Participants will get to know each other better.
- ✓ Participants will exchange ideas on and tune into the topic of the seminar.
- ✓ Participants will learn about the complexity of ideas, beliefs and feelings about the topic of sex education

Methods/ techniques used

- ✓ Working in pairs
- ✓ Free self-expression through drawing and writing

Resources

- ✓ White sheets of paper and markers

Practical arrangements

- ✓ Every participant gets one piece of paper and some markers.

Procedure

Step 1 (5 min)

- ✓ Divide the group into pairs either by simply pairing up participants with the person sitting next of them or by distributing cards or pens of different colours (two of each) and everybody pairs up with the person that has the same colour.

Step 2 (5 min)

- ✓ Tell participants to work alone for three minutes to draw-sketch or write down words concerning sex/sexuality education.

Step 3 (15 min)

- ✓ Ask participants to turn to their partners and work in pairs for another 5 minutes.
- ✓ They will have to introduce themselves and explain their drawing to the other person.
- ✓ Finally, in the whole group, every participant introduces their partner and explains what is written or drawn on the other's paper and what it means for the person.

Step 4- Debriefing (5 min)

- ✓ Moderate a short debriefing discussion based on the questions below:
 - How did this activity make you feel and why?
 - Did you feel connected to the rest of the group?
 - Does everyone have the same ideas about sex- and sexuality education?

Tips for trainers

- ✓ Start off by pointing out that we all come from different backgrounds and with different experiences of sex and sexuality. It is important that we are respectful and being respectful sometimes means keeping an opinion to yourself, realizing that it might be offensive to someone in the group.
- ✓ At this point you may give a general statement or comment pointing out the similarities and the differences in the drawings of the group reflecting all the different backgrounds, beliefs, values and experiences each and every one has and how these may influence our students.
- ✓ It is important that you as a facilitator do not discuss or criticize opinions and ideas. There is no right or wrong opinion at this point. Remember that opinions are just one person's perspective made up of the person's experiences.
- ✓ This activity is useful and successful if the participants are not very familiar with sex education and come up with a lot of different ideas.

Activity 3: SexEd! What is it? Why do we do it?

Duration: 60 min

Expected outcome

- ✓ Participants' awareness of what sex/sexuality education involves will be raised.
- ✓ Participants will understand why we do sex/sexuality education.

Methods/ techniques used

- ✓ Debate and discussion

Resources

- ✓ The "why we do sexual education" cards (Appendix 2) are laminated cards with statements that can introduce a discussion or debate on why and what to teach in sex/sexuality education.

Practical arrangements

- ✓ In the first part of the activity, you will need empty floor space where you can spread the cards out and participants can walk around.
- ✓ In the second part, you will need two rows of tables or two rows of chairs facing each other for the debate.

Procedure

Step 1 (10 min)

- ✓ Spread the "Why we do SexEd?" cards on the floor.
- ✓ Ask each participant to choose the card that they think best answers the question "why do we need to teach young people about sex and sexuality?" Once they have chosen the card, have them sit in a circle around the card and ask them why they chose that particular answer.
- ✓ Once they have discussed their answers, make the point that all the reasons mentioned and listed are important and relevant to sexual health education.

Step 2 (10 min)

- ✓ Divide the participants into two groups. An easy way to divide a group with nonverbal communication is by randomly sticking a colored dot on their back, using only two colors and an equal number of each color, and then asking participants to form two smaller groups without talking.
- ✓ Seat the two groups opposite each other.
- ✓ One group is instructed to be in favour of teaching sex and sexuality education and the other group is instructed to be against for all the (perhaps wrong) reasons they can think of. The task is for the groups to collect as many arguments as possible.
- ✓ Help by giving some ideas and new perspectives for and against.

Step 3 (20)

- ✓ Organize a debate: for example, you can ask for volunteers to be first, second and third speakers on both sides, and set time limits for the speeches.
- ✓ Once the debate got started, interfere only when it is absolutely necessary. Otherwise, just take notes of points you want to discuss later on.

Step 4 - Debriefing (20 min)

- ✓ Post or project some important ideas from the debate and moderate a discussion based on some of the questions below:
 - Did you have to argue against your own personal convictions? How did it feel?
 - Did you get to see a new perspective on any of the topics?
 - Have we deconstructed any stereotypes?
 - Have you changed your opinion about any of the issues?
 - Were any of your beliefs or values questioned in this activity?
 - Could you adapt the debate structure in your own classes?
 - What are the advantages and potential difficulties of debates?

Tips for trainers

- ✓ It is important to choose and use statements that will provoke a debate after which a constructive discussion can follow.
- ✓ Depending on the heterogeneity of the participants' background and any potential social and cultural stereotypes, there might be some thorny disagreements, reflecting similarly opposing views widely held in society and in educational policy.
- ✓ The arguments for sex and sexuality education are expected to be based on research supporting that comprehensive and flexible sexuality education programs have been found to delay the age when young people become sexually active (Baldo et al., 1993; UNAIDS, 1997).
- ✓ The arguments against sex education are expected to be low cultural acceptability, taboos, stereotypes etc.

Activity 4: Bananas

Duration: 30 minutes

Expected outcome

- ✓ Participants will experience how things that are different on the outside may be similar on the inside and think about how people are different but equal
- ✓ Participants will learn about the right to non-discrimination (Article 2)
- ✓ Participants will learn to respect differences and accept diversity as an asset
- ✓ Participants will understand the relationship between generalization and stereotypes
- ✓ Participants' empathy will be developed

Methods/ techniques used

- ✓ Working with the whole group

Resources

- ✓ Original source of the Banana exercise:
http://www.globalvillage2006.org/en/do_something_about/prejudice/banana_people

Practical arrangements

- ✓ Every participant gets a banana.

Procedure

Step 1 (5 min)

- ✓ Provide bananas for each participant. Ask them to “get to know their banana” but not to peel it or eat it.
- ✓ They must closely examine their banana and notice all its characteristics (smell it, touch it, observe it).

Step 2 (5 min)

- ✓ After a few minutes, put all the bananas in a large bowl.
- ✓ Then ask the participants to find their banana. Most will recognize their own banana.

Step 3 (5 min)

- ✓ Now, ask the participants to peel their banana before they put it back in the bowl.
- ✓ Ask them once again to find their banana.
- ✓ This time, it will be more difficult and someone may say: “But the bananas are all the same!”

Step 4 - Debriefing (15 min)

- ✓ Use some of the questions below to debrief the activity:
 - Did you enjoy this activity?
 - How did you recognize your banana the first time?
 - The second time?

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- How did you feel when you tried to find your banana among all the peeled bananas?
 - We saw that the bananas were different on the outside. What about the inside?
 - Can you think of some ways that people can be different on the outside?
 - Can you think of some ways that people can be the same on the inside?
- ✓ Discuss the fact that people may look very different, act differently, or have different interests, but they still deserve respect. We should not judge people based on differences such as the color of their skin, their hair or the shape of their nose. People are different, but equal.
- What are some ways that we can make sure that we treat everyone as equals in our group? Why was it so easy to identify your banana?
 - Have you ever had ideas / opinions about a person that turned out to be wrong once you got to know the person?
 - Has anyone ever had ideas / opinions that changed when you met someone?
 - Why are stereotypes dangerous?
 - Have you ever been the other fruit in a banana-world? How did you handle it?
 - How does all this relate to sex and sexuality education?

Tips for trainers

- ✓ Be careful of disclosures and make sure you have set the rules for safety and respect.

Activity 5: Gender boxes

Duration: 30 min

Expected outcome

- ✓ Participants will become (more) aware of gender role stereotypes
- ✓ Participants will explore how the media and society shape the roles for men and women
- ✓ Participants will see how stereotypes/gender roles are shaped and perpetuated by the society they live in
- ✓ Participants will recognize the negative impact of intractable gender roles for both boys/men and girls/women and also to explore how gender stereotypes impact on their own lives by limiting their choices and opportunities
- ✓ Participants will gain confidence to challenge gender stereotypes ('normalised' or 'accepted' beliefs about masculinity or femininity) and the harmful behaviours that are used to enforce them often by limiting people's choices and, in many cases, their behaviors as well.

Methods/ techniques used

- ✓ Group work
- ✓ Posters

Resources

- ✓ Gender boxes idea adapted from:
<http://www.medinstgenderstudies.org/youth4youth-empowering-young-people-in-preventing-gender-based-violence-through-peer-education/>

Practical arrangements

- ✓ Tables accommodating groups of four.
- ✓ Photos and or videos form magazines and the Internet presenting typical traditional gender roles.

Procedure

Step 1 (15 min)

- ✓ Participants are divided into groups of four.
- ✓ Photos from magazines and the Internet are presented.
- ✓ Participants discuss in their groups what the "expected" behaviors are for women and men as presented in the pictures, what is considered by many as "feminine" and "masculine".
- ✓ Participants take turns in their micro-groups to draw the two gender boxes and fill them in with all the stereotypical attributes, roles and behaviors associated with women and men.
- ✓ Ask participants whether they could swap the labels at the top of the boxes and use the words written down for women about men and vice versa?

Step 2 - Debriefing (15 min)

- ✓ Discussing the controversies with regards to gender roles: for example, while women are often expected to be timid, shy and sexually prude, they are also expected to be sexy, provocative and 'sexually hungry' or while men are expected to be tough and macho, they

are also expected to be gentle, sensitive and caring.

- ✓ Base the debriefing discussion on the following questions:
 - How do societal expectations give rise to gender inequalities?
 - Have they ever affected you or people you know personally?
 - How do teachers reinforce/break gender stereotypes?
 - Do you know of techniques to help learners question stereotypes?

Tips for trainers

- ✓ The issue of gender roles and stereotypes is quite sensitive and a difficult one to understand.
- ✓ The gender boxes might include the following words:
For women: curvaceous, sexually hungry, nurturing, nice breasts, desirable, dreamy, beautiful, provocative, romantic, nice hair, sexy, sweet, slim, pussy cat, weak, great body, sly look, inferior to men, takes care of her appearance, housewife, dynamic, demure, caregiver, looks after the kids, no sexual life
For men: dynamic, tough, seeks the glory, athletic, successful, ambitious, strong arms, rich, wild, womanizer, ready to beat up somebody, aggressive, sexy, selfish, superior, sly, player, desired, dominates women, provocative, confident, exploits others, sexually dominant.

Activity 6: Evaluation

Duration: 20 min

Expected outcome

- ✓ Participants will summarize what they have learned and will give constructive feedback on the workshop.

Methods/ techniques used

- ✓ Group story writing

Resources

- ✓ As many sheets of paper as participants

Practical arrangements

- ✓ Participants will have to sit in a circle.

Procedure

Step 1 (15 min)

In order to debrief and evaluate the seminar a fun activity is proposed with the title “Once upon a time...”. This is a quiet but entertaining experience of teamwork, promoting cooperation, equality, respect and non-discrimination.

- ✓ The participants sit in a circle on the floor holding paper and pencil.
- ✓ Everyone must write, at the top of the page, a story, that is 2 sentences long, about the seminar. For example, they can describe the seminar as if it was a journey, what they learned, what they liked, what difficulties they encountered or what they can use from the materials and activities in their teaching.
- ✓ Ask them to start the second sentence on a new line.
- ✓ Ask the participants to fold the paper over so that the first sentence is hidden and only the second sentence is visible.
- ✓ When everyone is finished, ask the participants to pass the paper to the person sitting on their left.
- ✓ After the participants have read the sentence on the paper that they have just received, ask them to add 2 more sentences to the story on separate lines and ask them to fold the paper again so that only the last sentence is visible.
- ✓ Ask the participants not to read the hidden sentences.
- ✓ Continue passing the papers around until everyone has contributed to each story.

Step 2 (5 min)

- ✓ Everyone takes turns reading the stories out loud.
- ✓ The stories are usually quite funny but they also help reflect about the experience and internalize some of the ideas and materials that the participants would like to use in their work in the future.

References to the sources of some of the activities:

<http://www.medinstgenderstudies.org/youth4youth-empowering-young-people-in-preventing-gender-based-violence-through-peer-education/>
http://www.globalvillage2006.org/en/do_something_about/prejudice/banana_people
<http://www.humanrights-edu-cy.org> (further reading for exercises on empathy, diversity and acceptance)

Further reading:

Baldo, M., Aggleton, P. & Slutkin, G. (1993). Does sex education lead to earlier or increased sexual activity in youth? (Geneva, World Health Organization).
 Cyprus Family Planning - <http://www.cyfamplan.org>
 Ioannou S., Kouta C. & Charalambous N. (2010). Health Education Curriculum. Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, Ministry of Education, ISBN: 978-9963-0-9117-1.
 IUHPE-International Union of Health Promotion and Education. (2009). Achieving Health Promoting Schools: Guidelines for promoting health in schools, available at <http://www.iuhpe.org> (accessed 30 February 2014).
 UNAIDS. (1997). Impact of HIV and sexual health education on the sexual behaviour of young people: a review update (Geneva, UNAIDS).
 Walker, J., & Milton, J. (2006). Teachers' and parents' roles in the sexuality education of primary school children: a comparison of experiences in Leeds, UK and in Sydney, Australia. *Sex Education*, 6 (4), 415-428.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Task sheet for the activity “Find someone who ...”

FIND SOMEONE WHO ...

... has a family member from another country	... spends time with elders or seniors and thinks they rock!!	... speaks more than one language	... goes to a mosque or temple.
... came from a different part of the world	... doesn't laugh at racist, sexist, or homophobic jokes.	... has traveled to France	... has helped out a teen parent
... is a friend of a lesbian, gay, bi, trans, or two-spirited person	... is or knows someone who is adopted.	... has donated items to a food drive.	... has sat by a river for an entire afternoon.
... uses or knows someone who uses a wheelchair	... volunteers (and where they volunteer).	... knows how to milk a cow.	... has given out condoms to friends or someone who needed or wanted one.

Appendix 2 Statements for the “Why we do sex/sexuality education” cards

- ✓ To reduce the spreading of sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- ✓ To reduce unwanted pregnancy
- ✓ To empower people to make healthy choices
- ✓ For people to know when and where to go for help
- ✓ For people to know how reproduction works
- ✓ To learn about sexual diversity
- ✓ To take responsibility for sexual health
- ✓ To encourage positive relationships
- ✓ For more young people to practice safe sex
- ✓ To learn about contraception
- ✓ To learn about STIs
- ✓ To understand what consent means

Questions to generate further discussion:

- ✓ Teaching sex education encourages children to have sex. Is this true?
- ✓ Did the teaching of sex education in schools remove the role of the family in sex education?
- ✓ I did not have much sex education when I was young and it did not affect me negatively. It is best to let children learn what they are interested in, in their own time?

- ✓ Is it true that if you talk to children about sexuality, it will encourage them to experiment?
- ✓ When I suspect that a student of mine is being sexually harassed, what do I do? Do I ignore it so as not to get into trouble or do I try to get as much information as I can? Or??
- ✓ What do I do when a student asks me a question that I cannot answer?