

# Comprehensive sexuality education - Child consultations

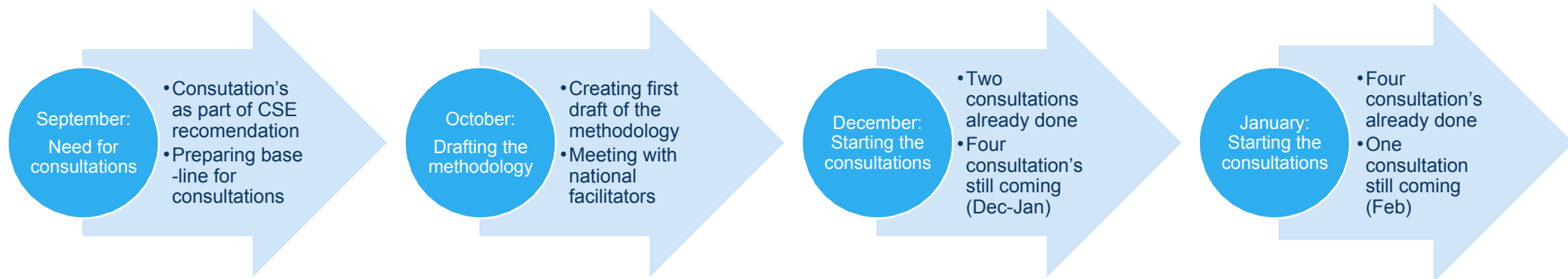
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# Preparing the consultation process



# Why child consultations are needed?

- Consultations are based on children's rights
- Need of age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education
- Need of non-binding instrument. Including:
  - Accurate, evidence-based information
  - Information and critical understanding of the biological, social, cultural, emotional and psychological aspects of sex, sexuality and relationships
  - Information on and critical understanding of gender equality
  - Information and critical understanding about personal and bodily autonomy and integrity
  - Create active skills-based learning with the necessary competences to be able to recognise and respond to harmful sexual behaviour, whether engaged in by adults or peers and whether committed online or offline;
  - Empower children to prevent violence





# Implementing the methodology



- Three workshop possibilities: Short workshop (1,5 h), Medium workshop (2 h ) and Long workshop (2,5 h)
  - All divided into four parts: Introduction, Thematic priority, reality chec and future steps
  - Medium includes also more discussion about internet and differences
  - Long includes also discussion about sexual violence
- It's up to the facilitator to choose the form depending on children's age and wishes
- There is also questionnaire to use separately or as part of workshops

## Child consultations

- The aim of the consultations were to provide recommendation children's opinions and insights
- The consultations were created based on the previous work of the Council of Europe (e.g. Lanzarote committee and Giving a voice to every child)
- In total (so far) **59 children and young people** between 13-22 years
  - 37 girls**
  - 22 boys**
- Some work were conducted with high school children (they participated in one workshop)
- 2 children with special needs, from different living environments and backgrounds
- Children and young people were from Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Ireland and Italy (Child Rights Connect; Croatia, Albania and Spain)





# Child consultation process and questions

- Information: Do you have enough information about CSE? Where have you received it? Is it interesting and useful?
- Discussion of who, when or how CSE should be taught
- Discussion about the safe space and secrets
- Internet: Safety in online, unsafe possibilities, unwanted pictures or messages,
- Differences: Are some children more vulnerable than others? How background should be taken into consideration?
- Sexual violence: Does the information help you identify sexual violence?



# Child consultations

- CSE: where, who, when and how?:
  - Professional educators outside of school (if teachers they should be familiar and comfortable about the topic)
  - There were variation about who should be teaching CSE (familiar teacher or a parent or professional “outsider” from e.g NGO)
  - Safe and comfortable place
  - During school hours and obligatory for everyone (kindergarten and schools are priority but also (sport)clubs and free-time environments or online-platforms)
  - Should start with younger age (for example emotional education from 6 years or younger)





# Child consultations

- Safety on internet
  - Children and young people are asking help also in digital world
  - Children see both risks and possibilities on internet (it is sometimes safe)
  - More understanding about what is “normal” or suitable behavior in internet
  - Guidance to what to do if something goes wrong (knowledge already about blocks and unwanted pictures)
- More vulnerable children
  - Children with, mental health problems, lonely or quiet children, children from socially disadvantage families or from poor family relationships
- Sexual violence
  - CSE could be a tool to prevent and protect against sexual violence
  - Knowledge is now incomplete, and education limited especially about sexual violence
  - More information about how to protect yourself, what is sexual violence and informed consent





# — Child consultation's – main findings

## —CSE is important and needed

- Children know about the topic already, what they ask about CSE is reliable and truthful information
- Knowledge comes from the internet, parent's, friends, siblings (some also from schools/teachers)
- Children saw comprehensive sexuality education as the answer to prevent violence and combat misinformation
- They also told CSE is needed for understanding their bodies, build self-awareness, set boundaries, and develop deeper understanding of assertiveness and informed consent.



- *"This topic interests all of us young people, and it's only right that we get enough information."*

- *"I never learned at school what to do in case of violence. My knowledge came from therapy and accounts on Instagram."*

Reliable sexuality education is important so that children and young people:

- *"Don't believe lies."*

- *"Understand themselves and their bodies, avoid situations like unwanted pregnancy, and know how to set boundaries and be assertive."*

- *"Recognize that this is universally useful knowledge, something everyone should have as general knowledge."*

A man with a beard and a young child are lying on their stomachs on a grassy field, blowing bubbles. The man is wearing a blue denim shirt over a white t-shirt, and the child is wearing a grey t-shirt. They are both smiling and looking at the bubbles. The background is a soft-focus landscape with trees and a building under a warm, golden light, suggesting sunset or sunrise. A white semi-circular graphic element is on the right side of the image, containing the text 'Thank you!' and an email address.

# Thank you!

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