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Committee of experts on the Prevention of Violence (ENF-VAE)

REPORT ON CHILD CONSULTATIONS

Contributing to the preparation of a Recommendation to member states
on protecting children from violence through comprehensive sexuality
education

enf.vae@coe.int
www.coe.int/cdenf

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CONSULTATIONS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (2026)

To contribute to a Recommendation to member states on protecting children from violence through comprehensive sexuality education

QUESTIONS

- I. What are children's **experiences** of CSE?
- II. What are their **wishes** for CSE?

CSE = Comprehensive Sexuality Education




245 children
and young
people
Aged 9 to 22


12 countries

  
in person online survey
11 sessions


6 reports



Limitations of the survey limited representativeness; overrepresentation of Slovenian respondents through online survey and few young children

I. FINDINGS

CSE experiences → too limited, optional, and focused on biology

Sources of information → school, the internet, peers, low parental involvement

II. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

WHEN

- **Start from early age** (preschool)
- **Age developmentally appropriate** and **evolving** content that is regularly updated

HOW

- **Interactive teaching**: workshops, debates, various materials, online session;
- **Inclusive teaching**: LGBTQ+, disability, secular, ungraded
- **Mixed sessions** not necessarily separating groups by gender;
- **Participation and involvement of children and youth** in developing CSE content

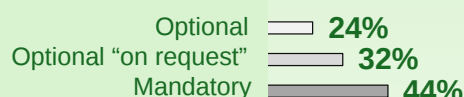
WHAT

- Address **relational and emotional aspects, consent, violence prevention, and managing situations of online violence**
- Break down the **taboo** of talking about sexuality

WHERE

- In a **safe environment** with trust, respect, protection, inclusion, and without judgement
- At **school, at home, in sports clubs**, on online platforms and on social networks

Degree to which CSE should be compulsory



Note : Online survey U-Report UNICEF 2024, (n=159)

BY WHOM

- **Educators** and professionals/ specialists trained and qualified, at ease with the topics, complementing teachers and health professionals
- **Involvement of parents** by offering resources and training

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. As part of the implementation of Priority Area 1 of the Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027)¹, whose aim is to achieve “freedom from violence for all children”, the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF), through its Committee of Experts on the Prevention of Violence (ENF-VAE)², is mandated to develop a draft Recommendation on protecting children from violence through comprehensive sexuality education.
2. Under point 2.5 of the 2022-2027 Strategy on “Giving a voice to every child”, children are encouraged to participate in all activities concerning them, in acknowledgment of the unique value of their contributions to efforts strengthening human rights, democracy and social cohesion.
3. In this connection, and in order to incorporate children’s opinions into the work of preparing the Recommendation, a consultation of children and young people was conducted with the Council of Europe member states on the subject of comprehensive sexuality education (CSE).³
4. Accordingly, between November 2024 and March 2025, consultations were held with 245 children and young people between the ages of 9 and 22 from 12 different countries.
5. This report brings together the views expressed, and suggestions made by the children and young people during these consultations. ⁴ Having described the general context, it will present the methodology used, the results of the consultations and lastly, its conclusions and recommendations.

II. MIXED METHODOLOGY

2.1 Methodological reference framework

6. The methodology used for this consultation is in keeping with:
 - the application of “the right of the child to be heard”, as recognised by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;⁵
 - the Guidelines for the implementation of child participation in the activities of the Lanzarote Committee (2023);⁶

¹ Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027) available in <https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/strategy-for-the-rights-of-the-child>.

² See the activities of the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child and of its expert committees at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/cdenf>.

³ Throughout the report, comprehensive sexuality education should be understood to refer to age-appropriate education in sexuality and will be abbreviated as CSE.

⁴ This report draws from the compilation and analysis of the reports of each consultation of children and young persons, which was carried out by Dr. Elina Stenvall, Director, research and quality, SOS Children’s Villages Finland,

⁵ General Comment No. 12 (2009), Committee for the Rights of the Child.

⁶ *Guidelines for the Implementation of Child Participation in Lanzarote Committee’s Activities and the European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse*, T-ES(2023)14.

- the Council of Europe Handbook on children's participation - For professionals working for and with children (2020),⁷ which recommends the use of the so-called Lundy participation model;⁸
7. These fundamental requirements guarantee safe, ethical, inclusive and purposeful participation, in which the child's best interests are a priority at each stage of the process.

2.2 Countries involved

8. Eleven consultation sessions were held with children and young people from **twelve countries**:
- Eight national consultations in four countries: Finland, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia.⁹
 - One binational consultation attended by children and young people from Italy and Ireland.¹⁰
 - Two multinational consultations involving children and young people from seven different countries: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Ireland, Moldova, Northern Ireland (UK) and Spain.¹¹

2.3 Formats and arrangements

9. The consultation format gave precedence to groups rather than individuals (apart from an online survey). All the participating countries were free to choose their own format and select their own facilitators. Participants then explained their decision in their respective reports. Some countries were able to draw on pre-existing groups of children and young people while others created groups specifically for the purpose. All consultations were run by at least two facilitators, all of whom were specialists in running workshops designed for children.
10. Five different consultation methods were used:
- face-to-face workshops held in the form of role-play sessions, "walking debates" or "world cafés" (2);
 - online workshops on Discord or Zoom (4);
 - mixed consultations made up of an online workshop preceded or followed by an in-person-one (4);
 - one online survey using the U-Report platform.

⁷ Handbook on children's participation for professionals working for and with children (2020) <https://rm.coe.int/publication-handbook-on-children-s-participation-eng/1680a14539>

⁸ Lundy, L. (2007). "'Voice' is not enough: Conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child." *British Educational Research Journal*, 33(6), 927-942.

⁹ Held by the Online Youth Community Center Loiste (Finland), the HINTALOVON Child Rights Foundation (Hungary), SEXEDPL (Poland) and UNICEF (Slovenia).

¹⁰ Held by: the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the Italian Parliament, the National Youth Council in Ireland and the Italian National Children's Council within the Office of the Italian Ombudsperson for Children and Adolescents, managed by Defence for Children Italy (DCI).

¹¹ Held by Child Rights Connect.

2.4 Composition and diversity of groups

11. A total of **245 children and young people between the ages of 9 and 22** were consulted. For each consultation, the aim was to form a group of 10 to 20 children and young people, taking account of various aspects such as age, gender, national origin and social background, specific vulnerabilities or the migrant status of the children/young people or their parents. The online poll, which was conducted in Slovenia, was open to all children and young people, and used the U-Report platform, meaning that it was not restricted to a small, predetermined group.
12. One of the digital workshops involved young people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities or expressions and sexual characteristics (also referred to as LGBTIQ+ young people in this report).

Table of consultations

Consultation country (and facilitating organisation)	Number of children and young people	Number of sessions held	Age of children and young people	Format used
Poland (SEXEDPL)	12	2	16-22	Mixed: one face-to-face, one online
Slovenia (UNICEF Slovenia)	20 159	1 1	13-19 13-22	Online workshop Online poll
Ireland and Italy (organised through the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly)	17	1	14-19	Face-to-face workshop
Hungary (HINTALOVON Child Rights Foundation)	10	2	14-17	Mixed: one hybrid and one face-to-face workshop
Finland (Online Youth Community Center Loiste)	11 5	1 1	13-19 9-10	Online workshop Face-to-face workshop
Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Ireland, Moldova, Northern Ireland (UK) and Spain (Child Rights Connect)	11	2	-	Online workshops
Total	245	11	9-22	Face-to-face workshops, online workshops, mixed consultations (face-to-face and online), poll

2.5 Ethics and safeguarding

13. Consulting children raises major ethical issues, particularly as regards protection, respect for privacy and informed consent. To meet the related requirements, national facilitators were explicitly tasked with ensuring that the process fully met the ethical standards relating to the conduct of consultations with children.

14. The Child Safeguarding Policy covering the activities of the Children's Rights Division of the Council of Europe¹² was used as a reference point, in addition to the child safeguarding policies of the organisations coordinating children's participation. The roles and responsibilities of the Council of Europe and these organisations were clearly defined. Preparation meetings focusing on child safeguarding were organised with the national organisations responsible for the children's participation. Before they were asked for their consent, children were informed, in a language and manner that they could understand, of the applicable laws and regulations regarding data protection, the use, storage, and processing of personal data, and their right to withdraw from the consultation process at any time with no consequences. At the end of each workshop, special care was taken to inform the children and young people involved about what would follow, particularly as regards the potential adoption of a Committee of Ministers recommendation on protecting children from violence through comprehensive sexuality education.

2.6 Data analysis protocol

15. Data analysis was conducted in several stages including, on the one hand, examination of the quantitative data from the poll and online workshops and, on the other, qualitative analysis of the interviews, then finally, comparative analyses to consolidate and enrich the overall understanding of the results obtained. Analysis was carried out by the partner organisations which helped organise each consultation, then by international consultants assisted by the Secretariat.
16. Interpretation of the data was organised along six thematic lines:
 - a. information on the subject;
 - b. the meaning of CSE;
 - c. information sources;
 - d. the importance of the subject;
 - e. attitude to the subject;
 - f. expectations concerning CSE, divided into sub-themes: what subjects, when, why, by whom, where and how.
17. This approach provides an in-depth understanding of the perceptions, needs, and expectations of children and young people regarding CSE.

2.7 Limitations

18. The interpretation of the results of the consultation takes account of a number of methodological limitations in terms of both how the groups were formed and how the data were collected and analysed.
19. Firstly, the composition of the consultation groups did not make it possible to obtain an entirely representative sample because participants from one country (Slovenia) were highly overrepresented and there was a large proportion of adolescents and young adults, which limited the extent to which younger voices were heard. Facilitators could

¹² Children's Rights Division Child Safeguarding Policy available at <https://rm.coe.int/2019-council-of-europe-child-safeguarding-policy/168098c6cf>

not influence the group's composition and diversity according to age, disability, migration status or other criteria.

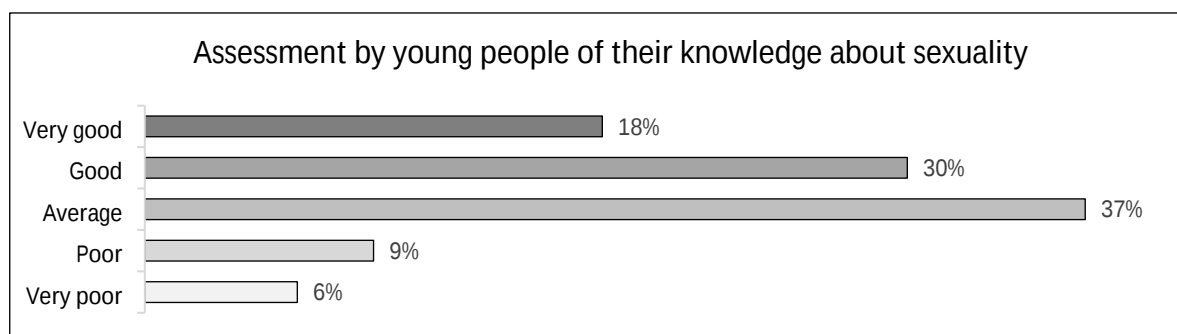
20. Analysis of the quotations provided was also undermined by a lack of contextual information such as the age, gender or country of origin of the children quoted. This made it impossible to accurately attribute the comments collected to specific profiles, thus limiting the scope and precision of the interpretations that could be made of them.
21. In addition, the use of notetaking limited the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the data collected and may have affected the quality of the analyses produced.

III. RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATIONS

22. The following summary is derived from a comparative analysis of the answers given by the children and young people in all the consultations conducted.

3.1. Information on the subject

23. The children and young people consulted consider that the information provided by the sexuality education they were provided with was incomplete and poorly suited to their expectations and their age. Many themes were reported to have been glossed over or avoided, particularly the prevention of sexual, psychological and emotional violence, consent, self-assertion, managing limits, gender diversity, sexual orientations, and male contraception. Despite some isolated positive experiences, the subject remained largely taboo at school and at home. Teaching sexuality education was found to involve little interaction, lack relevance and be undermined by a failure to apply participatory methods and by a lack of training for those providing it.
24. On the subject of sexual violence, the children and young people consulted gave specific examples of how they could protect themselves and their peers. They are aware of online sexual violence and the need for internet safety but feel powerless where it comes to preventing such violence and inappropriate behaviour, particularly online. Nor do they know who to address if they have a problem.

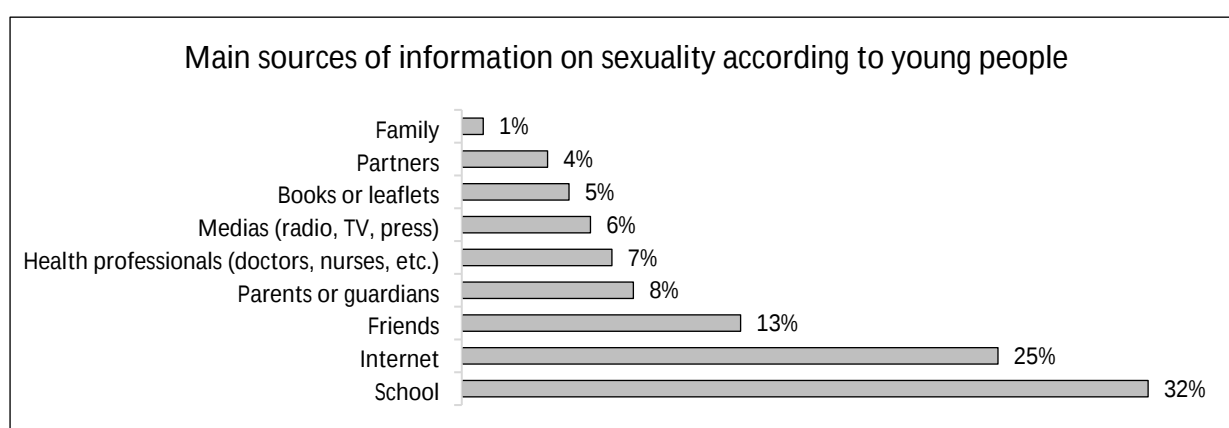


Note: UNICEF online U-Report poll 2024, (n=159)

3.2. The meaning of CSE

25. In the online poll conducted in Slovenia using the UNICEF U-Report platform, 52% of respondents said that CSE meant discussing interpersonal relationships, 26% that it meant learning about body parts and 23% that it meant understanding feelings and emotions.
26. Of the 11 children from Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Ireland, Moldova, Northern Ireland (UK) and Spain consulted by Child Rights Connect, 92% answered that sexuality education means “gender equality, gender identity and sexual orientation” and “sexuality and reproductive health”.

3.3. Sources of information about sexuality education



Note: UNICEF online U-Report poll 2024, (n=159)

27. Although the above graph shows that the 159 Slovenian children and young people consulted online get most of their information on sex and sexuality primarily from schools, and then the internet, the 11 children and young people of various nationalities consulted at the workshop held by Child Rights Connect stated that their main sources of information were **internet** and the **social networks** but also, and equally, **parents** and family members (particularly brothers and sisters).
28. Children and young people as a whole report that they find out about sexuality on the internet, particularly on social media platforms such as YouTube, TikTok and Instagram. They say that these platforms provide them with quick access to a wide variety of content, but they also highlight the risks of disinformation and of failing to check sources.
29. School is also a source of information, which is provided in particular by school nurses. Children and young people also mention their peers, friends and classmates as preferred sources for the exchange of information. Young LGBTIQ+ people say that they get information from books and scout camps.
30. Parents are rarely consulted and sometimes cannot even help, with some young people stating that they themselves have to inform their families. Some children and young people also mentioned older siblings as a source of knowledge, as they feel more comfortable and at ease talking to them than their parents.

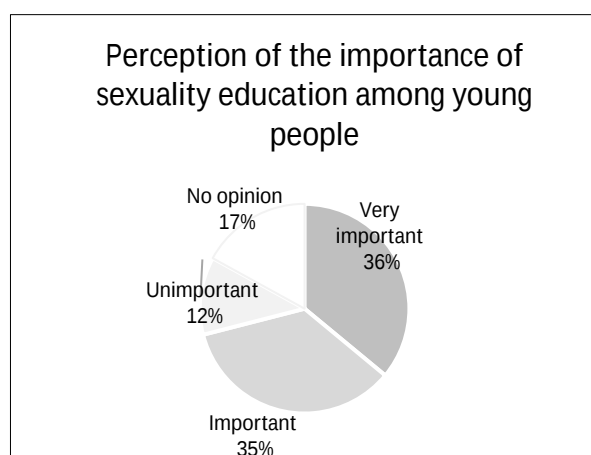
3.4. The importance of sexuality education

"This topic interests all of us young people, and it's only right that we get enough information."¹³

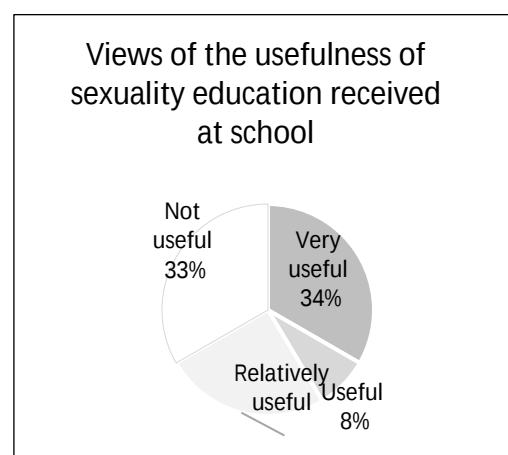
"In the 1st and 2nd years, we should learn what you should and shouldn't do. After that, learn more! We shouldn't send people out into the real world without knowing anything."

"I would just like to say that conservatives say that if there was more sexuality education, it would lead to more sex, but the truth is that the more young people know about the risks of sex, the less they are going to have sex and the more responsible and less risky it will become."

31. Age-appropriate CSE is seen by children and young people as crucial for preventing violence and combating disinformation. It is necessary to help them to understand their bodies, develop self-awareness and assert themselves, set boundaries and understand informed consent. In their view, a lack of information may result in serious problems such as unwanted pregnancies and increased levels of rape and gender-based violence.



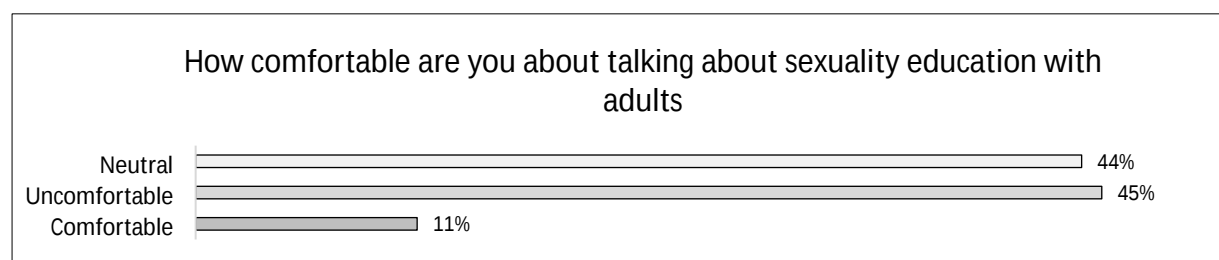
Note: UNICEF online U-Report poll 2024, (n=159)



Note: Online Child Rights Connect workshop 2024, (n=11)

3.5. Attitude to the subject

32. Most of the children and young people were not comfortable with the idea of talking about sex and sexuality with adults. Some said that at school, ESC sessions existed but were often optional, too brief, centred on biological aspects and given by staff who were untrained or ill at ease, thus limiting access to practical, up-to-date information.



Note: UNICEF online U-Report poll 2024, (n=159)

¹³ All the passages in blue and italics in this report are the words of children and young people consulted during the group consultation on CSE.

3.6. Expectations concerning comprehensive sexuality education

a. What subjects should be covered?

“everything should be covered. A bit of everything. I'm 18, and I feel like I know nothing about sexuality at all. We only learn about the male and female body and that's it.”

“Love, friendship and what they mean, together with relationships and breaking the stigma around not being in one.”

“The health information classes were horrible because things were presented from a male-female perspective that made me start to feel like I shouldn't even exist.”

“I just remember that it was mentioned in no more than a sentence or two that gays also exist by the way!”

“We want to talk about topics that aren't normalised, like porn and LGBTQIA+.”

“As a boy with a trans background, I didn't get anything out of sex education because everything was presented in traditional terms.”

“We went to a family counselling centre in the ninth grade (14-15 years old) and there was a lot of information about contraception, but only from a hetero perspective. For example, oral dams weren't even mentioned”.

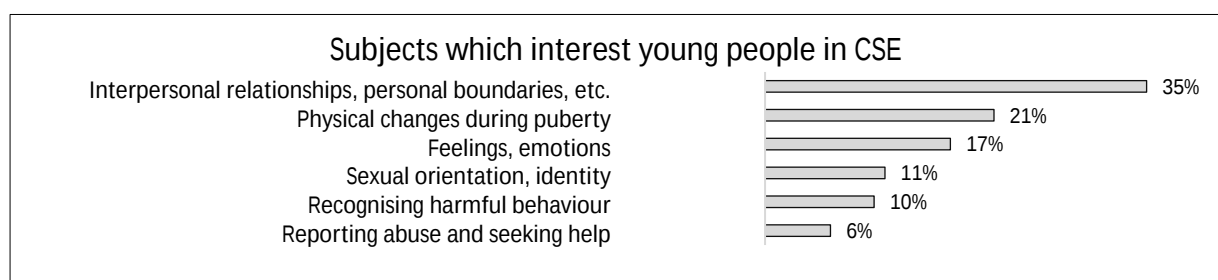
“There was nothing in school about boundaries. I had to find about this myself.”

“I never learned at school what to do if I was faced with violence. My knowledge came from therapy and stories on Instagram.”

33. The children and young people consulted say that there is a need to start sexuality education at an early stage, with **evolving and appropriate content** covering biological, psychological, relational, emotional, legal and social aspects.
34. More specifically, content is expected to relate to preventing violence and sexually transmitted diseases and infections, consent and boundary setting, self-assertion, contraception, managing feelings and relationships, ways of dealing with situations of sexual or emotional violence, rights and resources to be used for help in the event of difficulties.
35. Young people also express a need to involve parents, through tailored information and training, to dispel taboos within families.
36. For the young LGBTQIA+ people questioned, there is too much emphasis in the current form of CSE on sex- and gender-heteronormative and binary content. They would like this

to change and suggest that professionals and others who provide sexuality education should be informed about differences and diversities.

37. Other subjects were raised such as abortion, which was identified as a sensitive topic, with some children saying that they experienced fear during education about abortion and asking for more general information about the subject.
38. Young people also complained about disinformation online and the absence of age-appropriate content, particularly on informed consent, sexual violence and sexual health. They also asked for more information to help them understand what “normal” or “suitable” behaviour on the internet consists of.



Note: UNICEF online U-Report poll 2024, (n=159)

b. When should CSE be taught?

“I’m 14, and I think we should normalise sexuality education at a young age.”

“It might be a good idea to start when children are 4-6 years old; for older children, it’s too late, because youngsters are curious and will look things up on the internet.”

“This year I’m in secondary school, and I’ve started talking about it a bit. Before, I didn’t know where babies came from or even about menstruation.”

“Pregnancy and birth should be discussed already (especially since children are becoming aware about this at an increasingly lower age).”

39. Most of the children suggested that CSE should start **at an early age**. Some said it should start in pre-school (kindergarten), others in primary school and still others “in school”. Several pointed out that although the main responsibility still lay with parents, childminders (or other carers) and teachers also played a major role.
40. It was suggested that certain subjects should be taught to **very specific age groups**. For example, some of the children and young people proposed that emotional education should start at the age of six, that bodily changes should be addressed at seven, that sexual health should be discussed at eleven and that subjects linked to sexual orientation should be introduced at the age of 14.
41. They also highlighted the importance of tailoring content and materials to different life stages and regularly updating them to reflect current societal issues and realities.

c. Why should CSE be taught?

42. The children's and young people's answers suggested the following reasons:

- **It prevents sexual violence and risks linked to sexuality:** CSE helps young people understand their rights and boundaries and how to handle situations involving sexual or emotional violence. As a result it can serve as a tool to prevent and protect against sexual violence. It may also help to reduce the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.
- **It helps with personal development,** particularly if it is provided at an early age, because it fosters a healthy understanding of sexuality and can reduce the stigma and embarrassment associated with the subject.
- **It contributes to inclusiveness and equality** by taking a comprehensive approach taking account of all facets of sexuality including its social, cultural, psychological, emotional and relational aspects. Some participants suggested that religious barriers to access to CSE should be eliminated so that all children and young people can benefit from this education without any restrictions.

d. Who should teach CSE?

"You can get information in two ways: one is okay, and the other is not. We need information that allows us to form our own opinions. If this topic is used to scare us, we don't feel comfortable."

"I didn't feel a connection with my teacher, but the relationship with the educator was completely different. Thanks to her, I wasn't afraid to bring up difficult topics."

"If the teacher is the same gender, it's easier to relate to them."

"Sexuality is still a taboo topic. I don't dare ask my Mum and Dad about it at home. My parents know me best, but at the same time, it's hard to talk to them about this subject."

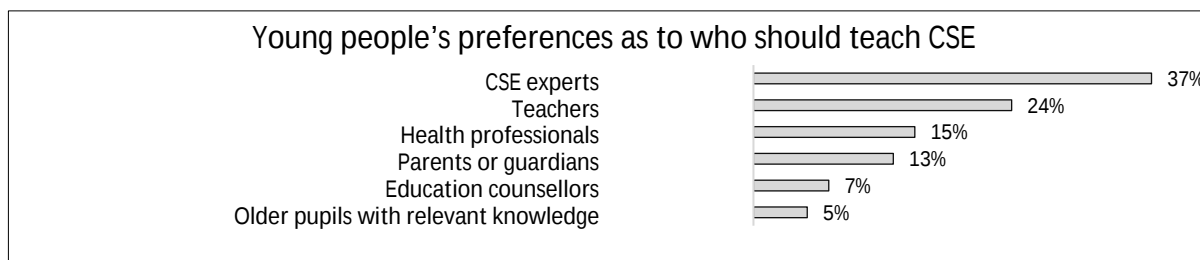
43. Children and young people suggested that CSE can be taught by various professionals who must be able to create a safe and non-judgmental environment in which pupils are comfortable enough to express themselves and ask questions. Specifically, they mention CSE experts, teachers, NGO staff and sports club professionals. **Qualified external experts are preferred** because they are considered to guarantee quality and make it easier for children and young people to talk as there is no fear that they will come across them in other settings of their everyday lives.

44. The children and young people identified several qualifications for a good CSE educator:

- **Expertise in sexuality education:** educators should be experts in sexuality education, such as sex educators, sexologists, or psychologists. This ensures that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to teach the subject effectively.
- **Comfort with the topic:** educators should be comfortable discussing sexuality and related topics. This helps create a safe and inclusive environment for students.

- **Professional experience working with children and adolescents:** educators should have experience working with children and adolescents. This helps them to understand developmental stages and tailor content accordingly.
- **Ability to create a safe environment:** educators should be able to create a safe, non-judgmental environment where students feel comfortable expressing themselves and asking questions.
- **Knowledge of scientific information:** educators should rely on scientific knowledge as the basis for their CSE instruction. This includes information about sexually transmitted diseases, contraception and abortion.

45. In this context, children and young people also highlighted the complementary nature of roles and the shared responsibility of parents and school. This was shaped in part by a concern that not all parents have capacity to teach CSE. As noted above, some young people stated that they have to inform their families about sex and sexuality matters.



Note: UNICEF online U-Report poll 2024, (n=159)

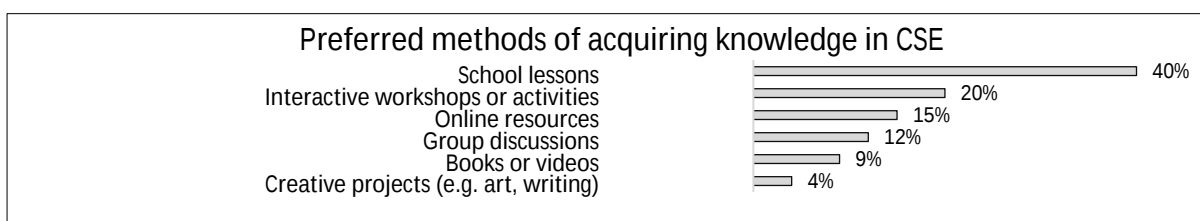
e. Where should CSE be taught?

"It is important for us to get sexuality education at school. Sometimes in class though, there are people that aren't mature enough; they're not ready for the subject. We need to learn at home as well."

"It's important to have it at school, but also at home."

"NGOs and public health clinics could also organise teaching sessions."

46. The children and young people suggested that CSE should be taught in various settings and environments to ensure equal access for all. Specifically, they mentioned **schools, home, sports clubs, online platforms** and **social media**. They also said that it was essential for teaching to take place in safe, non-judgmental environments, in which everyone could speak freely and ask questions. It was also important in their view to ensure that educators were well-informed and comfortable with the subject.

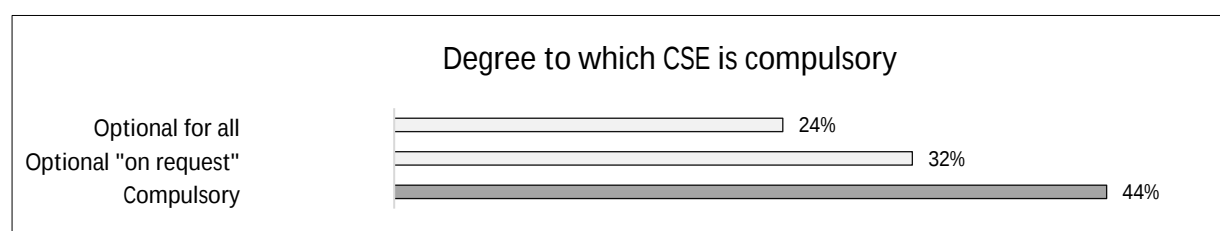


Note: UNICEF online U-Report poll 2024, (n=159)

f. How should CSE be taught?

“Since it should be mandatory, you have to take part – there’s no choice. Sexuality education is a human right, just like food, warmth, and shelter.”

47. The children and young people emphasised that CSE should be regarded as a **fundamental right** and taught at all stages of development and in all areas of life. Those consulted also wanted to be taught about their human rights. In an online workshop, 92% of the 11 participants recommended that CSE involved should teach about human rights including topics such as gender equality, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexuality and reproductive and sexual health.



Note: UNICEF online U-Report poll 2024, (n=159)

48. **Opinions of the various groups of children consulted diverged on whether CSE should be compulsory.** The graph above shows that a relative majority of the 159 children and young people who took part in the online poll are in favour of compulsory CSE. Face-to-face groups were also in favour of compulsory CSE for all pupils but specify that this should be ungraded, structured, secular, based on scientific approaches, inclusive for LGBTQ+ persons and pupils with disabilities and free of any political or religious influence. However, in some groups, most of the children and young people who took part in workshops or polls wanted CSE to remain optional (particularly the group consulted through Child Rights Connect).
49. A large majority of children and young people wanted CSE to be **taught in mixed classes**. Children and young people pointed out that special classes for different groups are not appealing because no one wants to be seen as different, so creating a comprehensive sexuality education format that “fits for all” is crucial. At the same time, they recognised that there were some groups who needed special attention, such as children and young people suffering from mental health issues. Lonely and quiet children should be encouraged to get involved because they might not participate voluntarily. Special attention should also be paid to the needs of young LGBTIQ+ people so that they could learn things that were really useful to them.
50. In the children and young people’s view, CSE should be taught using **interactive methods** including participatory sessions, group discussions, debates and the use of varied materials such as tests, quizzes, games and videos.
51. Young people want to be able to **participate in the preparation, assessment and dissemination of this content**, or to play the role of peer educators.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

52. A comparative analysis of the consultations highlights that children and young people are **already aware** of topics such as sexuality, sexual abuse, and violence. Their knowledge is incomplete however, as many subjects are not covered by CSE (consent, prevention, diversity, male contraception). Much of the teaching is not geared to the pupils' age and expectations and involves little interaction or participation, while instructors often lack participatory pedagogy and training.
53. Based on the consultations, children and young people suggest that reliable CSE is **important** so that children and young people:
- Are not deceived by false or misleading information.
 - Understand themselves and their bodies, know how to set boundaries and be assertive, thus contributing to their personal development.
 - Learn how to reduce stigma and foster equality and inclusiveness.
 - Avoid future issues, such as problems in relationships, unwanted pregnancies, or risks for their health (such as sexually transmitted diseases or infections).
 - Receive useful information to help prevent and protect them and others against sexual violence.
 - Break the perception that sexuality education is a taboo or unnatural subject.
 - Recognise that this is universally useful knowledge, something everyone should have as general knowledge.
54. The children and young people who participated in the consultations **encourage European governments** to incorporate these ideas and experiences into the Council of Europe's instrument and national legislation and to **involve children and young people throughout the adoption process of CSE**. They call for the adoption of a practical and understandable Committee of Ministers recommendation, inspired by the following **key recommendations**:

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Themes that should be covered

CSE must be extended beyond biological issues and must not gloss over delicate issues. It must:

- teach interpersonal relationships, psychosexual development, knowing one's body and emotions, boundaries, consent, and withdrawing consent.
- touch upon reproductive health, family planning, contraception, and challenging subjects like abortion in a neutral manner.
- include issues relevant to gender equality, gender identity and sexual orientation.
- respond to issues faced by individuals with disabilities.
- address sexual and emotional violence and online violence. Teach children and young people how to protect themselves and where to seek help, provide guidance on how to support peers experiencing violence and what responsibilities lie with adults.

2) Reliable and balanced information

There is a desire for accurate and balanced information, based on science and free of political and religious influence, capable of countering the risks of online disinformation.

3) Appropriate and evolving content

CSE should start at an early age, ideally already in pre-school with evolving content geared to pupils' age and development, updated in line with changes in society and supported by accessible resources.

4) Inclusiveness

It is crucial to create a CSE format that suits all children and young people. What is needed is a safe, non-judgmental environment and mixed classes. More vulnerable children and young people, such as those with mental health issues or from socially disadvantaged families, need special attention.

5) Learn about CSE in different settings

Children and young people should have access to various forms of CSE in different settings such as at school, in extra-curricular activities, through their parents, as well as on online platforms and social media.

6) Compulsory CSE

Most are in favour of compulsory CSE for all during normal school hours, but some groups prefer optional lessons, without grading requirements.

7) Employ specialists in CSE

CSE should be taught by qualified professionals, sexuality education experts or NGOs. Educators should be able to create a safe, non-judgmental environment, using participatory and interactive teaching methods. Special sessions led by guest speakers such as doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists should also be offered complementing educators, teachers and parents' actions.

8) Teaching without awkwardness

It is considered particularly important that people teaching CSE are comfortable with the subject and free of any embarrassment or awkwardness. Adult discomfort and taboos make the subject awkward or difficult to address whereas children and young people do not consider it to be embarrassing.

9) Adequate resources

There should be adequate resources to teach and inform about CSE, and capacity building activities for those providing CSE.

10) Involve parents

Sexuality education should be extended to parents to help them address these topics with their children and expand their own understanding. Knowledge and practical activities for young people on how to talk to parents about sexuality should be increased.

55. The children and young people were enthusiastic during the consultations and positive about their experience. Some of them felt that they could learn more about CSE in general thanks to the workshop. One said that he now feels more comfortable talking about CSE. Participants also said that they would be interested in attending further consultations in their schools, and at regional, national and international levels.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Workshops table

Short workshop/ online (1.5 hrs)	Medium workshop (2 hrs)	Long workshop (2.5 hrs)
Introduction and scene setting (20 mins) Short definition of comprehensive sexuality education adapted to children's age. Initial work on Mentimeter*: “Are you comfortable talking about relationships, sex or sexuality with your friends?” “What does sexuality education mean to you?” “Why is it important for children to receive sexuality education?”		
Thematic priority and first step (20 mins). (This can be done using a flipchart or post-its) - Do you have enough information about relationships, sex and sexuality? What do you know? - Have you received this information from school/parents/friends/online? - Is the information you have learned at school interesting and useful? - Is your school focusing on things that you don't think are important? Facilitator presents: there has been talk about secrets or obeying rules. What if someone does something to you, for example touches you in a way that doesn't feel right and tells you not to say anything, should you obey these rules? Why/why not? When do you not obey? Next step, if someone says “this is secret”, should you obey them and keep it secret? In what circumstances would you not obey them? What should you do if someone touches you and you don't like it? Should these kinds of issues be included in comprehensive sexuality education? Are you getting to know enough to understand what is the right or wrong way for you to be treated? How can sexual education protect children and young people better, or give them the tools to be safe?		
<u>Items to be added to a 2-hour workshop</u> Regarding the use of the internet (use new sheet) - Do you feel safe on the internet? - How might the internet be unsafe? - Did you ever stumble across unwanted and/or sexual and/or harmful images or material on the internet (for example pornography)? - How could this be addressed in comprehensive sexuality education? Have you talked about how to react when viewing sexual or harmful images online? Regarding respect for differences - Are some children more vulnerable than others? Why? - Is the education you received mindful of differences and specific situations (such as gender identity and characteristics, children with disabilities, migrant or ethnic backgrounds, street children...)?		
<u>Items to be added to a two-and-a-half hour workshop</u> What else should be addressed in sexuality education to prevent sexual violence? - Is the information you receive helpful and sufficient to identify all forms of violence, including gender, sexual and digital violence? - Have you received information on how to report or who to report to? - Other ideas?		
BREAK (10 mins)		
Reality check and common understanding (20 mins). Create these questions on Mentimeter (or use some other way to vote) and ask participants to vote.		

1. Teacher teaches you at school with all your classmates about relationships, sex and sexuality education.
2. Professional sexual education expert comes to your class and teaches you and your classmates about relationships, sex and sexuality education.
3. Targeted sexual education is provided in your sports club, activity or camp.
4. You are invited to join an online group where sexuality education is taught.
5. You know that in your neighbourhood there are NGOs, youth centres etc. that will give sexuality education, and you can participate if you want.

And now what? Recommendations, considerations and proposals (20 mins)

Do all participants feel the same way or are there other opinions?

What format of delivering comprehensive sexuality education content, for example in school, would work best for them?

Who has provided them with the most information about sexual education so far? Do they know enough about the topic to feel safe?

How do they feel that they might be involved in this topic in the future?

Appendix 2 – Template for consultation reports

The facilitators are responsible for reporting back to the Council of Europe, in particular to the Secretariat of the Steering Committee on the Rights of the Child (CDENF), on the results of the consultations with children. A suggested structure for the country reports is given below. Facilitators are free to include further information and details if they consider it useful. The deadline for the submission of the country reports is specified in the contract. The international consultant or the Secretariat based themselves on the reports from the facilitators and took due account of the input from the children.

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Consultation	
Facilitator(s)	<i>Please provide information on who oversaw the organisation and who contributed to the organisation of the event, together with information on the facilitator(s).</i>
Sessions	<i>Please provide information on the dates and location of the sessions, their duration/time etc.</i>
Thematic priority or activity	<i>Consultations to contribute to the drafting of a Recommendation to member states on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education.</i>
Format used	<i>Face-to-face or online</i>
Children	<i>Please provide information regarding the number of children consulted, age, gender, national origin or social background, specific vulnerabilities or other specific characteristics, where the children come from (city/region), how they travelled to face-to-face consultations, etc.</i>
Number of sessions held	
Other relevant information about the setting	<i>Any other information, for instance information about the dynamics and interaction between the children and between the children and the facilitator.</i>

SUMMARY OF RESULTS	
Children's and young people's thoughts and considerations about the theme: What information have they already received? Do they have enough knowledge and how can it be improved? Do they know enough to prevent violence? If you used a longer format, include these thoughts here.	
Children's expectations for the future; how, where, when, and by whom should sexual education be taught?	
Specific proposals as to what should be included in comprehensive sexuality education.	
How do children/young people think they could be involved in this topic in the future?	
Quotes from children (if there are any)	
Other relevant information to be shared	