



INTERNATIONAL GUIDANCE ON SEXUALITY EDUCATION (UNESCO March 2018)

Document analysis and recommendations

Acknowledging that UNESCO has a watcher role in identifying new risks in its field of competence and an advisory role in the associated decisions making, acknowledging the high quality of the work carried out for the elaboration of this document by a recognised team of specialists , it seemed appropriate to a group of UNESCO NGO partners to propose their collective reflection to the relevant UNESCO Sectors.

Respecting young people means considering them in all aspects of their person: physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual. Sexuality is an expression of all these dimensions.

Education has a major role to play in building balanced gender relations throughout the world. It has also a role to raise awareness that women and men, boys and girls, perform functions of equal importance and value. As « *relationship beings* », they participate in the construction of society in their roles as parents, citizens and actors and in the development of their country and humanity. Likewise, they share equal responsibilities, as well as equal rights, because of their common belonging to human nature.

It is important to consider what societies gain from promoting quality sexuality education, one of the benefit being reduction in poverty. Indeed, the temporary and repetitive exclusion from school of girls who have their period, and the often permanent dropout of those who are pregnant or who are victims of sexual harassment at school and on the way to school, de facto leads to a lack of education that is harmful to their future and that of their community. The need for education applies to both boys and girls. The construction of their personality, their life paths and their responsibilities are deeply linked.

It must also be noted that populations suffering from social or legal discrimination, moral or educational poverty, caste confinement, are unlikely to escape exclusion due to the lack of an influential relational network and/or sufficient financial resources to obtain help and support. Boys and girls alike, their only chance is access to education.

To inforce greater inclusiveness, the UN agenda, in its Statement of Objectives for Sustainable Development (SDG 2030) promotes, inter alia, the "International Guidance on

Sexuality Education" (UNESCO March 2018). In order for this very rich initiative to bear more fruits, it would be advisable for it to :

- Recognize the vital need for each person to love and be loved, in the long term and stability, which is of a different order than the practice of "safe sex" linked to hedonism and dependent on the bio-economy (commodification of the body, pornography industry...).
- Promote and develop comprehensive sexual education: physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual, for boys and girls, adapted to each age of life. *See p.16 of the document "Understanding comprehensive sexuality education", point 2.*
- Systematically include parents and legal guardians in this educational process (UDHR art 26 and Convention on the Rights of the Child preamble, art3, 18, 29). Thus, educating a generation with the involvement of parents would make it possible to establish an intergenerational dialogue within families that would guarantee mutual trust. *See p.19 « The CSE uses a learner-centred approach » and p.36 Key Concept 5.5 « Finding help and support ».*
- Take into account the degree of maturity of "learners" (different from their age of civil status) and the cultural pressures of the environment, consequently set up very small working groups. *See point 5.1 of the "Goals, age groups and structure " p. 34.*
- Move from an approach that would only be behaviouralist, by giving SENSE to the body. *See Key Concept 6 : The Human Body and Development and Key Concept 7 : Sexuality and Sexual Behaviour, p.36.*
- Become aware that there may be a power or power relationship within sexual intercourse. The negotiation for the consent of the partners is then neither free nor balanced. *See Key Concept 5 and 4.2, p.36.*
- Combat the trivialisation, merchandisation and instrumentalisation of sexual acts which have destructive consequences for the person; in particular for children who are now exposed very early, without any parental control, to pornography disseminated via the Internet. *See point 3.2 p.24 and Key Concept 5.4 Media Literacy and Sexuality, p.36.*
- Educate girls and boys in the esteem of their sexual body, received from conception. *See Key Concept 3 Understanding Gender, p.36.*
- Accompany young people with discernment in their questions about their sexual orientation. *See Key Concept 3, p.36. Develop dialogue and ethical reflection on the consequences of individual and societal choices concerning filiation and parenthood; See Key Concept 1 Interpersonal Relations, p. 36.*
- Be cautious in communication, about ideological biases presented as objective or scientific criteria. Keep in mind that Science has its own field of validity, just as sociology has its own perimeter. None of these disciplines says everything about humans.
- Provide accurate information on the beauty and responsibility of the transmission of life by physically and psychologically mature men and women, as an essential component of this education. Humans have the singular characteristic of being aware that they receive and transmit life as a gift. Using the term procreation in preference to

reproduction would be an illustration of this. See *Key Concept 8 Sexual and Reproductive Health and Concept 6.2 Reproduction.p.36*.

In conclusion, the CCIC working group, contributing to the reflection with the aim of reconciling Science and Wisdom, emphasizes that quality education (ODD4), in which sexuality education is part of, would:

- Take into account all the dimensions of the person, « *relationship being* », and in particular his/her universal aspiration to love and be loved.
 - to more peace in order to be able to build one's life in self-esteem and respect for others;
 - to live stable relationships over time, because young people know the constructive value of the family unit regardless of the difficulties encountered;
 - to ensure that medical technological powers are allies of care at all stages of life, the omnipotence of medicine being put into perspective;
 - to put Man back in his right place: a « *relationship being* ».

We are aiming at a generation on the way to its accomplishment, capable of responsible choices and with a taste for life!

Paris, June 28, 2019

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Platform of Christian-inspired NGOs, a UNESCO partner since 1947

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