

# Exploring new territories

Dialogues from a consultative meeting  
on comprehensive sexuality education

HOSTED BY IPPF ON 5 AND 6 MARCH 2012, LONDON



# Who we are

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) is a global service provider and a leading advocate of sexual and reproductive health and rights for all. We are a worldwide movement of national organizations working with and for communities and individuals.

IPPF works towards a world where women, men and young people everywhere have control over their own bodies, and therefore their destinies. A world where they are free to choose parenthood or not; free to decide how many children they will have and when; free to pursue healthy sexual lives without fear of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. A world where gender or sexuality are no longer a source of inequality or stigma. We will not retreat from doing everything we can to safeguard these important choices and rights for current and future generations.

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# Preface – a journey of discovery

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) works towards a world where women, men and young people everywhere have control over their own bodies, and therefore their destinies. We defend the right of all young people to enjoy their sexuality free from ill health, unwanted pregnancy, violence and discrimination. IPPF's work with young people is rooted in the premise that all young people are rights-holders and that at different points on the spectrum from infancy, childhood and adolescence, certain rights and protections will have greater or lesser relevance. IPPF also recognizes young people as sexual beings with diverse needs, desires, hopes, dreams, problems, concerns, preferences and priorities.

Increasingly, we no longer view ourselves solely as health service providers but also as educators. During the past decade, IPPF has put sexuality education at the forefront of its work with young people. IPPF fosters a comprehensive rights-based approach to sexuality. Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) contains components which allow learners to explore and discuss gender and the diverse spectrum of gender identities that exist beyond simple heterosexuality. It also contains components that examine the dynamics of power in relationships and individual rights. Last but not least, IPPF views sexuality as a positive force. The pleasure that we derive from sexuality is a vital part of our lives, whether it's the pleasure of feeling that a reproductive desire is fulfilled, the pleasure of sharing intimacy in a relationship, the pleasure of feeling confident to express one's identity, or any other type of pleasure related to sexuality. It's what makes us human. CSE views sexuality as a positive force, and celebrates diversity.

IPPF has developed its own 'Framework for Comprehensive Sexuality Education' and all levels of the Federation have contributed to developing and/or implementing numerous international, national and local guidelines and curricula, inside and outside the school setting. However, we feel that we still need to find out and explore the most effective ways to 'translate' our rights-based approach into teaching and learning approaches and techniques. Another new territory for IPPF is how to measure the effectiveness of sexuality education: why do we need to measure effectiveness, what do we need to measure and how?

To support our thinking and to facilitate a discussion on these issues, we invited 30 people from across the globe to London in March 2012 to attend a consultative meeting on CSE. Through a range of participatory group work methods, an environment was established where participants could contribute to the discussion in various ways. This report aims to capture the essence of the discussions, highlights key points and will hopefully stimulate further thinking.

This meeting was a first step to explore our new territories. We still have a long way to go. But this first step was extremely positive and useful. We couldn't have done it without our facilitator Anna Martinez, Coordinator of the National Sex Education Forum, who also wrote this report. We also thank Chelsea Ricker, an independent consultant on sexuality education, who wrote a thought-provoking background paper. But most of our thanks are for the participants, who worked extremely hard, participated with full enthusiasm and contributed their expertise in all the discussions.

Thank you to all who helped IPPF on its journey of discovery!

Doortje Braeken  
Senior Advisor Adolescents and Youth  
IPPF  
June 2012



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# Overview – roadmap for the journey

## Aims

While IPPF's 'Framework for Comprehensive Sexuality Education' sets out clearly our rights-based, gender-sensitive and sex-positive approach, along with the content of comprehensive sexuality education, the specific methodologies to deliver and measure effectiveness are not well defined. This report aims to pull together IPPF's current thinking on these new territories.

## Beginning the journey

IPPF began its journey by commissioning a thought-provoking paper to stimulate questions about the most effective pedagogical, teaching and learning methods, and ways of assessing their effectiveness. This was followed by a consultative meeting on 5 and 6 March 2012, in which experts were invited to share their perspectives and help IPPF identify a way forward. This meeting was considered the beginning of a process and successfully provoked thought and stimulated broad discussion.

## Objectives

The main objectives of the meeting were:

- to advise IPPF on the most effective methods to deliver comprehensive sexuality education
- to support IPPF to develop new ways of assessing the success of our approach to CSE
- to advise IPPF on how to translate these principles into our youth programmes (in school, out of school, peer education)
- to explore the role of IPPF and other stakeholders to take this process forward

## Time to reflect

We hoped this meeting would give participants the opportunity, the space and the time to reflect on old territories and explore new ones. An external facilitator experienced in participatory consultation techniques led participants through a series of presentations, discussions, group work and reflections in order to start answering key questions about how we deliver CSE and deepen our understanding of IPPF's role.

We purposely did not distribute a detailed agenda as we wanted the discussions to flow without too many restrictions. Instead, we developed a series of questions and issues that we wanted to explore and planned a range of participatory activities to help explore these. (A list of these questions, issues and activities can be found in Appendix 2.)

**Day 1**

On day 1, we provided an overview of IPPF's work on CSE, making it clear that we wanted to use the meeting to explore the 'how' and not the 'what' of CSE.

Throughout the day, participants shared their views on pedagogical, learning and teaching methods and there was some discussion on the types of learning necessary for good quality CSE. It became clear early on that there is a need to strengthen current methods of delivering CSE. However, it was recognized that introducing new ways of thinking could be challenging. It was also acknowledged that more information on pedagogies and input from educational expertise would be necessary to explore the issue in more depth. The day ended with a series of reflections including some preliminary ideas of how IPPF could take this work further.

**Day 2**

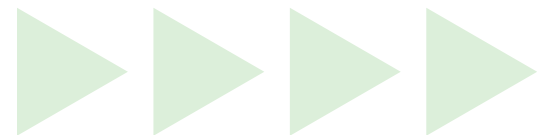
On day 2, participants reflected on the values that underpin CSE. We began to explore ways to measure the success and effectiveness of CSE that move beyond behaviour change. Participants worked in groups to map out what new indicators would look like. Many found this task a challenge and reported that more time would be needed to really understand the best indicators for CSE which go beyond those well established in public health.

[A background paper](#) on critical and feminist pedagogies was sent to participants in advance and was presented to stimulate discussion during the meeting.

**Action plan**

The day concluded with action planning and developing a set of recommendations for IPPF. Participants were also encouraged to suggest ways their organizations can collaborate with IPPF. It was evident by the end of the two days that there are some clear steps that IPPF and partners can take on the next part of their journey to explore new territories.

This report is divided into three main sections. The first section answers several questions. Why did IPPF decide to embark on this journey? Why now, what inspired IPPF and what tools did it choose to explore the issues? The second section of the report reflects on what IPPF has learned from the consultative meeting and its discussions with experts. The final section of the report sets out what steps IPPF needs to take in order to complete the journey.



# 01 Why take this journey to new territories?

Comprehensive sexuality education should respond to and celebrate the diversity that exists among young people across the world. It should equip young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to determine and enjoy their sexuality. Comprehensive sexuality education should take a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, and be part of broader emotional and social development providing opportunities to acquire life skills and nurture personal values.





## Where did the journey start?

IPPF's work is underpinned by the belief that all young people – regardless of age, faith, culture, ability or sexual orientation – have the right to enjoy their sexuality free from ill health, unwanted pregnancy, violence and discrimination. Increasingly, we no longer view ourselves solely as health service providers but also as educators. IPPF seeks to provide comprehensive sexuality education, information and services that respond to and celebrate the diversity that exists among young people across the world. In 2005, we developed IPPF's '[Framework for Comprehensive Sexuality Education](#)' which sets out our rationale and vision for comprehensive sexuality education and includes the main elements we believe should be part of sexuality education programmes.

IPPF believes that CSE should equip young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to determine and enjoy their sexuality. Comprehensive sexuality education should take a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, whether or not the young person is sexually active, and be part of their broader emotional and social development. Information alone is not enough. CSE must also provide opportunities to acquire life skills and nurture personal values. It should ideally be delivered using a participatory learning approach, within an environment that encourages critical thinking, especially about gender equity and rights.

Most of our Member Associations are involved in some form of sexuality education, information and awareness raising on sexual and reproductive health inside and/or outside the school setting. Member Associations implement a range of strategies, including advocating for changes in national sex education curricula, training educators, and collaborating with governments, ministries, parents and local communities to advocate for and implement comprehensive sexuality education. We have also been involved in the development of several national and international sexuality education guidelines.

To date, most of IPPF's work on CSE has been guided by a health perspective, whereas pedagogy and educational principles are a relatively new area for IPPF. We are currently looking at the most effective ways to deliver sexuality education programmes, and how to measure the effectiveness of our sexuality education work. To this end, IPPF invited sexual and reproductive health and rights experts and education experts to take stock of the state of the field and to discuss what we have come to consider the missing link. The meeting focused on two main areas: educational approaches to comprehensive sexuality education and measurement systems.

## Which new territories did IPPF want to explore?

IPPF acknowledges the importance of young people's access to CSE, both within formal and informal settings. It encourages Member Associations to promote a model of sexuality education

that is rights based and gender sensitive, and that considers the various socio-cultural factors, economic issues and power dynamics that influence sexual choices as well as the resulting emotional, mental, physical and social impacts on each young person's development.

While there is growing international consensus about the content of CSE, its delivery and measurement systems vary significantly. CSE is increasingly a matter not only of national interest, but international importance, as development agencies, states and funders increasingly recognize CSE as a critical development intervention. National and local programmes are increasingly influenced by international standards, but remain largely focused on public health (Ingham and Aggleton 2006). Health indicators are used to measure educational success, while young people's rights and autonomy are hardly included in quantifiable measurements of their sexual behaviours. IPPF, however, has recognized the importance of promoting gender equality and human rights in sexuality education in order to reach desired health outcomes more effectively.

The UNESCO 'International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education', the '[It's All One Curriculum](#)' produced by a consortium of international sexual and reproductive health and rights organizations, and the 'WHO Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe', among others, all emphasize the importance of human rights, gender equality, critical thinking and young people's participation in important, if different, ways. Yet while the content of sexuality education curricula and programmes is consistently improving, our ability to deliver programmes and measure effectiveness has not kept pace. Bound by behavioural health indicators, IPPF has been unable so far to take the time to consider the pedagogical approaches that best foster young people's ability to critically engage with their cultures, claim their human rights and take ownership of their sexual lives. However, the tide is turning and many agencies are now seeking to explore sexuality education in more depth. IPPF is committed to developing its understanding of these areas and considering its part in the debate.

### What is pedagogy?

It is very difficult to define a single definition of 'pedagogy'. To most people it means the science that explores learning, education and development of children and young people. It examines how these processes help young people to understand and develop their identity, to become independent adults, to be aware of the groups and the context they belong to, and to become critical and active citizens in their society. Pedagogy includes teaching and learning styles, but it is not necessarily confined to the classroom. Critical pedagogy, which has a more rights-based perspective of education, works actively towards the improvement of human well-being and freedom.



## Possible routes to take

### Shift from traditional pedagogies to an 'empowerment model'

Sexuality education seeks to support and empower young people to “handle sexuality in responsible, safe and satisfactory ways, instead of focusing primarily on individual issues or threats” (World Health Organization 2010 p.11). As young people’s sexual and reproductive rights have become recognized, international guidelines for sexuality education have become more aligned with a broader human rights approach as opposed to simply focusing on public health outcomes such as behaviour change.

There is growing recognition that rights-based sexuality education demands more progressive educational methods than simply imparting factual information to the learner. Although learning the ‘facts of life’ is still fundamental to CSE, the development of social skills and personal values requires an approach which considers the role of the learner’s environment, experiences and emotions. Shifting our pedagogical approach to sexuality education towards an ‘empowerment model’ – “in which the social and political implications of sexuality could be examined” – would provide a strong foundation for addressing the challenge of bringing together sexuality and human rights in classrooms (Mayo 2011 p.407).

Despite this consensus, a gap remains between programme rhetoric and programme implementation. The primary focus of discussions of CSE curricula remains on the content, and little time is spent considering methods and the role of the educator. If we begin not from the idea that the educator’s role is to pass along factual information to the learner, but from the position that educators are there to engage young people in a lifelong process of fact-finding, discovery and analysis, how does that change our approach to teaching sexuality education? To achieve global gender equality, and reduce stigma and discrimination related to sexuality and sexual health, how can we be more effective and plan CSE programmes to go past critical thinking to critical engagement?

### Critical pedagogy – learning as a method of social engagement

The background paper prepared for the meeting suggested that IPPF might consider the idea of promoting critical pedagogy. This approach links education to the naming and questioning of the

social interests it replicates, and to working actively towards the improvement of human well-being and freedom. Critical pedagogy is “a process which takes the experiences of both the learner and the teacher and, through dialogue and negotiation, recognises them both as problematic” (Grundy, quoted in Smith 2000 p.10).

Under a critical pedagogy model, the objectives of education are 1) to free the learner from the structural biases ingrained in their society, and 2) to empower individuals to negotiate, control and shape their realities (Aloni 2007). Using this approach, young people can question the interaction of knowledge and power, and learn “to use knowledge not only to understand the world, but to be able to influence those who are in power and help to mobilise those who are not” (Giroux 2007). By sharing and questioning the experiences of both the learner and the educator in a non-hierarchical setting, critical pedagogy challenges the learner’s constructed understanding of power. It opens mental and social space for young people to reconsider the socio-cultural norms and expectations that shape their experiences of sexuality and sexual health.

Critical pedagogy is a political exercise as well as an educational one, as it looks to lay bare the linkages between the classroom and society (Aloni 2007). If we adopt this model for developing curricula, we can draw on the theory of critical pedagogy inspired by Freire to “understand and engage schools as places where culture, power, knowledge and experience come together” in order to promote and protect human rights relating to education and sexuality (Giroux 2007).

### Feminist pedagogy – learning as a method of social transformation

Feminist pedagogy shares many characteristics with, and could even be understood as a branch of, critical pedagogy. The clearest connections are the privileging of individual experiences and the emphasis on education as space for social transformation. A feminist pedagogical approach to sexuality education would draw on a theoretical background which “validates difference, challenges universal claims to truth, and seeks to create social transformation” (Weiler 1994 p.12) by opening a dialogue between educators and young people on a holistic range of issues related to gender, sexuality and human rights, focusing on the individual’s experiences to construct a shared understanding from which to approach learning. Feminist pedagogy in this model would prioritize the development of student autonomy, defined as “the capacity to reflect on and make choices,” a capacity without which learners “are liable to be in thrall to arbitrary authority” (Scott 2006 pp.36–37).

Both feminist and critical pedagogy rely on a socially engaged curriculum to encourage learners to be “theorists of their own lives by interrogating and analysing their own experience” (Weiler 1994 p.20). Both focus on the liberation of learners through ‘conscientization’:<sup>1</sup> “that historical moment when one begins to think critically about the self and identity in relation to one’s political circumstance” (hooks 1993 p.147). When approached through feminist pedagogy, sexuality education offers a vital opportunity for conscientization, that key change in perception “which occurs in the ‘problematizing’ of a reality in conflict, in

1 ‘Conscientization’ is a concept coined by Paulo Freire that refers to the process of developing a critical awareness of one’s social reality through reflection and action. Action is fundamental because it is the process of changing the reality.

viewing our problems in life in their true context, [and] requires us to reconfront our reality" (Freire 1985 p.40). Looking to the vital importance of gender equality to young people's sexual and reproductive lives, we can see a clear benefit to a change in pedagogical approach. Critical feminist teaching methodology can be the key to unlocking the power to challenge stereotyped gender roles and harmful gender norms in the lives of young people (Ricardo et al 2006).

Feminist pedagogy provides a powerful way to engage male, female and transgender learners on issues of gender equality and social justice. For example, deconstructing gender norms and stereotypes within the classroom can have a strong effect on young people's consciousness and ability to draw linkages between social expectations and their experience of justice. Feminist pedagogical practices can therefore be key to addressing not only human rights and gender equality, but the underlying expectations of masculinity and femininity in our cultures and societies in ways that engage and challenge young people's lived realities.

Additionally, this approach – which combines the topics traditionally covered by sexuality education with human rights and civic or citizenship education – has strong potential to promote social justice, but requires a great deal of commitment on the part of all stakeholders. Educators and educational policy makers will need to embrace sexuality education as a place to "take the difficult risks of highlighting cultural stress-points, advocating equity for all learners" (Mayo 2011 p.411). At the same time, the difficulties of embracing such culturally risky subject matter using new and radical teaching methods could finally bring sexuality, human rights and civic engagement together for learners in a meaningful way (Mayo 2011).

## Connecting pedagogy to practice

Critical and feminist pedagogical approaches would seem to be the natural fit for IPPF's focus on CSE which challenges gender inequality, promotes social justice and privileges young people's participation. While these approaches are not especially new, promoting and incorporating them on a larger scale can pose some unique challenges. For example, we must acknowledge the cultural and social challenges this type of shift could provoke. On the global scale, fundamentalisms and cultural conservatism worldwide have caused increasing pushback against sexuality education which incorporates human rights and gender equality, and despite increasing support, sexuality education has not been recognized as a human right in any internationally-agreed conventions or treaties. Nevertheless, CSE advocates have successfully generated support through other international instruments including a strong resolution from the 45th session of the [UN Commission on Population and Development](#) (2012) and a bold report in 2010 by the [UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education about the human right to sexual education](#). One reason why sexuality education remains primarily a health intervention has been the relative success of getting information about sexual health as HIV prevention recognized on an international scale, so we are just at the beginning of the road to convincing policy makers of the importance of this pedagogical shift.

## What tools did we use to help us along the way?

Thirty participants were invited to attend this meeting (see Appendix 1). Participants were selected in consultation with IPPF's Regional Offices (to ensure regional representation), the consultant who prepared the background paper (to ensure representation from academic circles) and key partners including UNESCO.

Each individual brought a unique contribution to the discussion. In order to make the most of the expertise over a relatively short period of time an external facilitator was invited to help develop a programme which not only ensured the consultative process engaged all participants by creating an environment supportive of thinking, listening and sharing, but was also able to model the types of methods which are ideally suited to CSE. It is important, however, to note that participatory group work methods need more time than traditional didactic approaches to meetings. They require an experienced facilitator to lead the group through a series of steps to help create a space in which all participants feel able to contribute. The room layout was also important. For the main space we chose a circle of chairs without any tables to create an atmosphere of equality and unity and ensure that nobody could hide behind a table!

## The process

The first step was to help the participants get to know each other, especially to meet and greet people they did not know, and to introduce themselves to the group as a whole. A safe environment was created with the help of the facilitator and an agreed set of 'ground rules'. In any group setting some power dynamics are inevitable but the key to the process was to ensure that everyone had an equal chance to contribute at some level, in the way they felt most comfortable.

The second step was to introduce a warm-up activity. We chose pair work, and asked the pairs to reflect on their own personal views and experiences on the given topic. This was followed by building consensus by identifying views that all participants had in common.

From this foundation more in-depth exploration could begin, using a variety of activities including pair work, small group discussion, rounds of feedback and draw and write, fishbowl, Socratic discussion, brainstorming and reporting back. Another essential element of participatory group work activities is the reflection. This is an opportunity to consolidate one's thinking through this reflective time of talking, writing and sharing. Group reflections are of great value but, equally, personal reflection is essential.



## 02 What did we learn from our journey?

In rethinking how we teach and learn in comprehensive sexuality education, there was clear consensus that positive learning experiences moved beyond traditional didactic approaches. They included critical thinking, questioning and pushing boundaries. Comprehensive sexuality education is more than health education and has a role in human rights, gender equality, social justice and personal development – a political and social approach which looks at education as a place for social transformation.



## EXPLORING TEACHING AND LEARNING (DISCUSSIONS FROM DAY 1)

### What makes a positive learning experience?

We started the first day by asking participants to reflect on their own personal experience and to think about a time when they learned something profound, which may have changed their world view. They were then asked to explore how they learned, by whom and where. Using these memories, participants were asked to identify the characteristics which defined these positive learning experiences.

Some of these characteristics were dependent on the educator, what their relationship was like, how well they interacted, listened or treated the 'student' as an individual, whether they were trusted and proactive, and whether there was an emotional connection. Some characteristics described the content including being encouraged to think critically, in new ways, to consider fairness, to question power dynamics, to connect with the wider world. For some, the learning was immediate and for others it developed over time as a continuous process.

Positive learning was also dependent on the setting: for some it was informal and for others it was field-based and experiential. There was agreement that a safe, but challenging environment was necessary. For some, positive learning was fun, shocking, exciting and memorable and for many it had to be relevant to their experience. It was agreed that we need a shared set of values and principles that underlie 'positive' education and these were discussed by the participants. The list here summarizes the initial thinking.

#### Principles for positive education

Engages the individual

Promotes a reflective, critical analysis

Is transformative

Expands one's perspective to include the political and social lived realities

Considers the needs of the learners

Develops new skills

Reflects on values and empowers one to act in a space that is safe and free

Is fun and enjoyable

Contributes to social justice

Is empowering and makes one feel empowered through new understandings and/or new ways of doing things

Is relevant

Is learner-centred

Uses a variety of methods

#### Statements developed by participants through group work...

"A POSITIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE IS ONE WHICH...  
Simultaneously engages individuals' personal experience (emotional, cognitive, pleasurable) promoting a reflective, critical analysis that becomes transformative, by expanding one's perspective to include the political and social lived realities."

"A POSITIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE IS ONE WHICH...  
Inspires the learner to further understand the world around them by allowing them to question, experience and reflect."

"A POSITIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE IS ONE WHICH...  
Is empowering and relevant, that widens your perspective within a safe environment that is learner-centred and uses a variety of methods."

"A POSITIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE IS ONE WHICH...  
Considers the needs of the learners, transforms the personal/professional life of the learner positively, which challenges the learner to think in new ways, tries to develop new skills, reflects on values, and empowers them to act in a space that is safe and free in a manner that is fun, enjoyable and where the learner learns."

"A POSITIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE IS ONE WHICH...  
Contributes to social justice and is empowering and makes one feel empowered through new understandings and/or new ways of doing things."



## Areas for further exploration

What do we mean by 'empower'? Is this the term we want to use? It can refer to power imbalances – i.e. one person giving power to another. What are we empowering someone to do? Empowerment doesn't happen in a vacuum, it is about exchanging information and power. Can we talk about 'action competence' instead?

What are the different sources of learning, the different places of learning – where does a young person go? In other words, exercise caution against assuming a conventional learning environment. What are the different relationships between the learner and the learning environment?

What are the learner's experiential needs, because they are not universal?

## Applying principles to comprehensive sexuality education

After establishing and agreeing on a set of principles which underpin a positive learning experience, we began to consider how they could be applied to comprehensive sexuality education. Half the participants considered what a CSE session would look like if these principles were applied and the other half considered a CSE session without.

In summary, a CSE session which **is not** underpinned by positive learning principles would be didactic and not engage the learners. The learners may be bored, confused, distrust the teacher. It may result in the learners feeling isolated, anxious, not learning anything or having unanswered questions. They may not know who to trust or turn to if they need help. The session would not give the learners a voice and as a result the learning may not be relevant to their lives and create a 'sex-negative mind'. It may justify prejudice (reinforcing negative, discriminative views). The session would be a waste of time and money.

On the other hand, a CSE session which **did** apply these positive learning principles would take into consideration the needs of the learner. It would begin with what the learners already know about sexuality, sexual health and relationships. It would build on this knowledge and be relevant to their lives. The learning environment would feel safe with a group dynamic which creates a sense

of belonging. As a result the learners would develop their own networks of peer support. For this to happen it could not just be a one-off session but would ideally be a programme which develops over time. The educator would be competent and confident to use a range of teaching methodologies and technologies which would focus on the learner developing 'action competency'. It would provide opportunities for everyone to explore and foster their own individual values while also ensuring that certain rights-based values are highlighted and the various cultural and faith-based values are acknowledged.

## Rethinking how we teach and learn in CSE

There was clear consensus among participants that positive learning experiences moved beyond traditional didactic approaches. They included critical thinking, questioning and pushing boundaries. They also involved the student in their learning. These observations fed into the discussion on feminist and critical pedagogies which followed.

A summary of the background paper was presented and the idea that we need to rethink how we teach and learn CSE was explored. It was reiterated that there is broad agreement that CSE is more than health education and has a role in human rights, gender equality, social justice and personal development. It was also suggested that there has been enough discussion on content



## Areas for further exploration

Can we establish a common core of learning principles for comprehensive sexuality education, especially considering the variety of settings that Member Associations work in? What are the conditions for this? Can we always achieve this?

of curricula and so we should focus on the process of delivering comprehensive sexuality education. Participants were presented with the idea that we could use a political and social approach to CSE, which looks at education as a place for social transformation.

The background paper explored questions about how we can reconnect CSE to the world outside the classroom, and look at its potential for social learning and transformation. What methods exist to help us? Can they help us to connect CSE into the educational sphere more effectively? CSE has had a strong home in health promotion for a long time; we want to explore how we can bring learning back into it and connect with schools, classrooms and out-of-school settings in which education happens. Is this the way forward? Can and should we apply critical models to CSE and, if so, how? Should we be moving from critical thinking to critical engagement and view education as a political project, in a way that considers education as not just about knowledge transfer, but about breaking down inequities relating to race, class and gender, and about breaking down the systems of power that promote these inequities?

## Is there consensus to shift our way of thinking?

The majority of participants found these ideas powerful and thought-provoking, but also expressed concern that they may be too progressive for policy makers at this time. There was nevertheless consensus that IPPF was in a good position to explore and share this progressive thinking. One participant said:

“The background paper draws together the concepts very usefully in relation to sexual citizenship. Sexuality is on individual, familial, interpersonal, community and national levels. Reflecting what you would like to have happen on a larger school, happen within the classroom – the classroom as the ‘micro’, society as the ‘macro’.”

## Political agenda

Participants raised the following key points and questions:

- Is there a real consensus and desire by all stakeholders to shift our way of thinking?
- There is a political agenda behind the proposal to use critical pedagogy. How would this be perceived in different countries? We need to be strategic. One thing is what we want to do, and another thing is how we present it to the outside world.
- We have to think on two levels: what is in the background paper – and how we sell it. This background paper is too progressive for ‘selling’ CSE at this stage, but that doesn’t mean that in this room we don’t agree on the proposals. We have been investigating the health benefits, and this is what our advocacy is based on. The moment we move away from this, we counteract our own activities.

- We need to work with different players – policy makers, parents and others. We also need to think about what we mean by ‘young people’; this term is being used in a homogeneous manner.
- We need to think about the policy environment where we work – the background paper may be too academic. We need to think about how we will ‘package’ CSE. We also need to consider how we will measure progress.



## Sexuality education and existing curricula

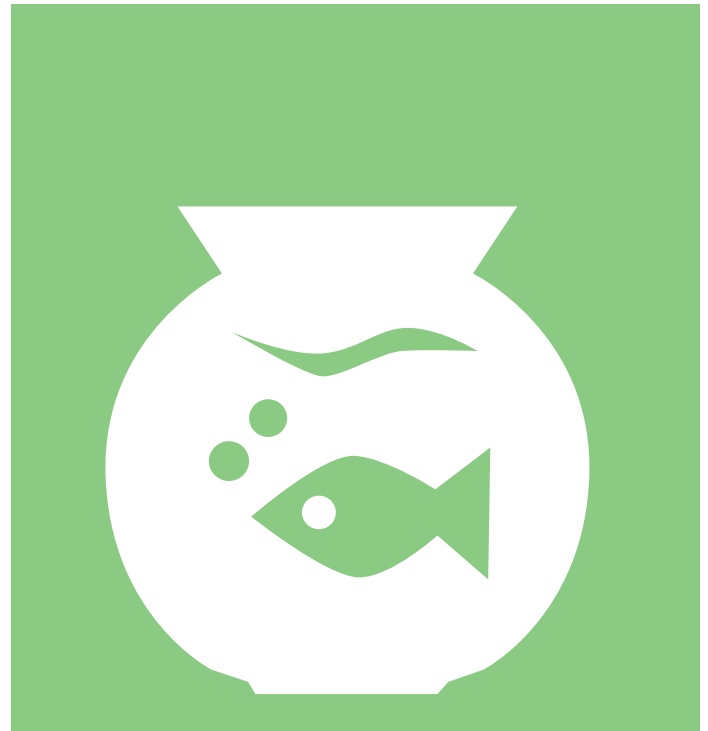
Participants raised the following key points and questions:

- Are existing sexuality education curricula good? For example, the Danish curriculum includes rights, but the implementation is very patchy. We have to take some steps back, and ensure that our policies are up to date.
- Sexuality education is overburdened; all of a sudden, it has to carry out all of these social transformation activities. Why not other subjects like literature or history?
- In many African countries, in the absence of HIV/AIDS, the assumption is that we don't need sexuality education. We need to spend a lot of time promoting the 'positive' aspect of CSE, rather than its purpose in eradicating the negative. We need to promote the value of CSE in its own right. We should not integrate it into other subjects. The paper almost argues the case to put CSE within citizenship education, but this can water down CSE.
- It's almost like a chicken and egg situation. Without knowing what outcomes we are seeking to have an impact on, it's difficult to decide on a pedagogical methodology for fostering those outcomes. In Latin America, the methodologies are not politically engaging. I cannot imagine going into Honduras and saying, "We have a political proposal for your CSE."
- Would all educators be capable of transforming the way that they teach? If so, what would that take?
- How do we move from an academic perspective to the grassroots level to close the gap in implementation?

## Levers for change

Participants raised the following key points and questions:

- Many international conferences talk about the inability to keep girls in school. Is the education system geared towards girls' needs? We must think about where we're going in the next decade, and if young girls are going to be the focus. Nobody talks about quality, and the role that CSE can have in that. It is so necessary that we rethink CSE. We haven't been fully successful in advocacy using health-based arguments, but the question is about whether the school system is geared towards the changes we want to make.
- Talking about sexuality from a health perspective is very difficult, but if we use the feminist pedagogies it becomes much easier. We have been writing and advocating a curriculum for the government in India, where we try to include a gender perspective into **all** curricula (English, maths, history etc). This background paper reflects what we do in the field. It is difficult to talk about sexuality without talking about gender! We have been doing this with young girls who are ostracized because of caste. The parents fear that the girls will be molested or that she might fall in love or have sex on her way to school.



## Taking stock of current CSE activities: key points emerging from the fishbowl discussion

Four participants were invited to share their knowledge on pedagogy and sexuality education from their organization's perspective. These organizations included the Population Council, UNESCO, the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe and the Danish Family Planning Association. The method used was called the 'fishbowl', in which the four guests – or 'fish' – sit in a small circle facing each other and have a 'conversation' about the given topic (as opposed to delivering a traditional 'presentation'). The other participants sit in a larger circle around the fishbowl and listen to the conversation. There is also a 'hot seat' where members of the outer circle can enter the fishbowl and ask a question. This approach aims to be more dynamic than a conventional panel discussion as it encourages a natural conversation.

The four panellists were asked to step out of the room while the remaining participants decided on the questions which would be asked (see Appendix 2 for the list of questions asked). When the participants were ready, the 'fish' were invited to sit in the 'bowl' and one of the participants sat in the hot seat and asked the first question. When the participant was satisfied with the answer they stood up, left the fishbowl and allowed the next participant to sit on the hot seat.

The main purpose of this in-depth discussion was to offer different perspectives to help inform participants' thinking for the remaining activities. Some of the key points which emerged from the discussion include:

- 'It's All One Curriculum' not only addresses content but also looks at pedagogy.
- Evidence-based, participatory methodologies lead to better health outcomes.



- Learner-centred approaches make it easier for learners to internalize and personalize the information.
- Critical thinking is absolutely vital if we want to work on gender equality and social justice.
- Denmark uses a Nordic approach to environmental pedagogy inspired by Swedish critical approach. Sexuality education in Denmark is inter-disciplinary and is using an education approach with the aim of facilitating young people to act and make changes in their lives. Policy level decision makers are going to ask “Why do we need this?” We need to be able to answer this clearly and carefully, especially as there are many other competing interests. “What is CSE?” – this is what we’ve been focused on for the past few years. Now we’re at the ‘how?’ stage – primarily asked by implementers and programme managers.
- Critical importance of well-trained and well-supported teachers.
- A rights-based approach requires discussion about gender norms and power dynamics, but this doesn’t always happen.
- There is an insistence on an evidence-based approach; however, we have to contend with approaches that are not based on evidence. For example, culture doesn’t involve evidence but is expected to be respected.
- Evidence-based approaches apply both to content and pedagogy.
- There is a body of literature that explores participatory skills-based approaches showing that these approaches are most effective.
- Germany uses the ‘emancipator’ approach which helps learners learn and discover for themselves. As learners differ from each other, this promotes a mixture of methods, appealing to different sensory facilities.
- No normative template exists on how sexuality education should happen; we can’t have anything overly prescriptive. CSE must be context specific and grounded in previous or existing approaches.
- When promoting participatory methods, we ask educators to give up some power. Quite often this can be fruitful, but the power exchange and reactions/consequences of brokering power can create a frightening experience for educators who are not trained in the methodology. A lot of educators are trained to think they always have to be in control.
- Blurring of what’s public and private can make learners and/or educators vulnerable.



## Putting new approaches into practice: the challenges, opportunities and recommendations

The first day ended with a brief appraisal of the challenges and opportunities which may exist when putting these new approaches into practice. Participants also started to think about some ways forward. The table includes key points from the discussion.

The challenges	The opportunities	The recommendations
<p><b>Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of teaching and training materials at country level</li> </ul> <p><b>Educator skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of skills and understanding about participatory approaches (not everyone is a good facilitator)</li> <li>Dominance of didactic approaches, educators' fears about losing power and control, lack of interest/motivation/ capacity of educators to adopt a new approach</li> <li>New unfamiliar methodology may be scary to the learner</li> </ul> <p><b>Status of CSE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSE not yet compulsory in many schools and health professionals and civil society organizations are not in charge of teacher training</li> <li>Lack of recognition that CSE is important (so why invest to introduce a new pedagogical approach?)</li> </ul> <p><b>Political will</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resistance by decision makers, educators and religious groups</li> <li>Difficulty in moving from policy to implementation</li> <li>Democratic deficiency – lack of support for democratic values</li> </ul> <p><b>Evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perceived or real lack of evidence and research on new approaches</li> </ul>	<p><b>Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curricula and guidelines are already available and resources exist for participatory learning</li> </ul> <p><b>Educator skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some educators already have the competency to teach and this applies to teaching CSE well</li> </ul> <p><b>Political will</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy environment conducive internationally to advance CSE</li> <li>Many governments are already or are starting to become concerned about quality of education – critical pedagogy could improve quality of education; can be a lever for education</li> <li>Sex education can be a lever to introduce critical pedagogy throughout educational sector</li> <li>Emerging funding possibilities for CSE</li> <li>Commitment from donors to work with young people, especially young women</li> <li>Consensus about importance of health outcomes exists and can be an entry point</li> <li>Critical pedagogy can be presented as an opportunity to link CSE more effectively with local context</li> <li>Opportunities to collaborate with progressive religious leaders</li> <li>Teaching sexuality education across different subjects</li> <li>Opportunities to use supportive media</li> <li>Young people as advocates for CSE and participatory approaches</li> </ul>	<p><b>Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop guidance for educators on methodologies</li> <li>Review existing training resources and identify gaps</li> </ul> <p><b>Educator skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on educator training and on-going support (including peer education)</li> <li>Provide capacity training for curriculum developers</li> <li>IPPF needs to work much more with implementers</li> <li>Involve and inspire commitment for good training from programme managers, civil society organization directors, and managers and directors from educational institutions and educational authorities</li> <li>Strengthen efforts to document CSE implementation and mapping what is already going on in IPPF</li> </ul> <p><b>Political will</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop policy and advocacy guidance</li> <li>Pool resources: strategic collaboration with civil society organizations based on their respective strengths and expertise</li> <li>Advocate for CSE to be examinable in schools</li> <li>Find new ways to engage communities and scale up successful approaches</li> <li>IPPF should influence public, specifically parents' perceptions</li> <li>IPPF needs to play to its strengths, be pragmatic and be strategic, e.g. work with people (teachers and other stakeholders) who can be ambassadors and champions. When speaking with the ministry of health, speak about health. When speaking with the ministry of education, speak about education</li> </ul> <p><b>Evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generate more evidence</li> <li>Create a position paper about the evidence on the effectiveness of methods</li> <li>Gather more evidence about the impact of critical pedagogy</li> <li>Develop indicators to measure success/improve assessment and evaluation</li> <li>Collect existing evidence of successful approaches to CSE from partners and networks</li> </ul>



## Areas for further exploration

### Implementation

- How do we identify the best facilitators for CSE delivery?
- Quality assurance and quality improvement in delivery of CSE: what needs to be done, and when?
- Need to analyze and prioritize characteristics of positive learning.
- How does the 'whole school approach' work?
- How can we help young people develop skills to share information and CSE skills with others, including parents?
- How do we really use critical pedagogy? What does it look like? How do we write it into programmes?
- How can we best support countries in moving forward with critical pedagogy?
- Peer education is an opportunity to introduce critical pedagogy to CSE, but requires more thinking about ongoing support and follow-up for peer educators to ensure quality and a rights-based approach.

### Measurement

- How do we measure skills versus knowledge and values?
- Has anybody measured empowerment effects? If so, how? What outcomes are we trying to measure?

### Local contexts

- How can critical pedagogy help to contextualize CSE to local contexts?
- How can we ensure our methodology is inclusive of everyone in all situations?
- How do we deliver CSE programmes in challenging environments?

### Moving forward and future collaboration among participants

- We need the adolescent perspective for positive learning experience (there were no adolescent participants at the meeting).
- How best can IPPF build a strong CSE programme using the available expertise?
- Share examples of very effective CSE programmes.
- How are we going to fund these recommendations? What donors are interested in this kind of work?
- Need to agree on the overall objectives as we continue the work.
- Further exploration on the philosophical basis of CSE.
- Who can help us to find our blind spots? (For example, don't forget about who our target groups are.)
- Go further into evidence-based CSE in out-of-school settings and in extra-curricular activities.
- How can we make better links with educational specialists?
- How do we form a pool of trainers on the methodologies discussed?
- Make better use of challenges and opportunities identified to inform strategic plans.



## EXPLORING HOW WE MEASURE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CSE (DISCUSSIONS FROM DAY 2)

### Beyond health outcomes

Before thinking about outcomes and indicators for CSE, participants were asked to reflect and discuss what they considered to be the values which underpin CSE. The list highlights the key values.

Firstly, it was clear that CSE is underpinned by a broad range of values. There was also consensus that these values – and the subsequent outcomes we want for young people – are broader than those used in public health. However, it was acknowledged that there is a danger that CSE could be overburdened with broader gender and human rights outcomes. This means that a balance is needed. How we select and prioritize certain outcomes and, in turn, how we measure them, is also much more of a challenge. Many curricula have already outlined individual level learning outcomes, but how these relate to societal and population level outcomes, and whether these will be of interest to funders, is a more complex issue.

Values that underpin comprehensive sexuality education

Self-respect

Freedom

Equality and equity

Sex-positive and pleasure

Learning about the complexity of life

Gender

Quality of life

Responsibility

Rights

Expression: having a voice

Connecting sexuality with your humanity

Diversity and respect

Inclusivity

Social justice and addressing injustice

## Mapping outcomes and indicators for CSE

Participants were presented with five different themes: gender, engagement, education, health, and stigma/discrimination. Participants were asked to explore one theme in small groups, and begin to map out what outcomes and indicators could be developed at individual, group, societal and population levels. Many found this a challenging exercise. Nevertheless each group was able to feed back something from their discussions. IPPF will use the material generated from the group work to develop its thinking on indicators and outcomes.

When the groups were asked to reflect on the process, the following key points arose:

- When talking about outcomes, indicators and goals it is crucial that we have a common understanding of the language. The terminology can mean different things to different people.
- There are so many possible outcomes that we could be looking at; our groups could have spent weeks and weeks on this exercise. IPPF will need to decide what it wants to focus on.
- The outcomes will be different depending on the context we are working in. We will not reach an overall agreement, and it may not be ideal that we do so.
- Is it possible to find a consensus on outcomes? Why do we need consensus on outcomes? Does IPPF need that consensus across its regions?
- It is much easier going to the project level and thinking about outcomes, rather than the population level. However, project level outcomes will not necessarily 'hit it' with a minister we're trying to convince to fund CSE. Within IPPF, we are charged at the moment with finding a way to measure the impact of our CSE across all of our Member Associations. We have to think about a measure that all our Associations can use.
- IPPF is well placed to push the boundaries and potentially pilot certain indicators that other organizations and donors are interested in. We have a role to play, and we want to pioneer.
- What do we need these indicators for? What do we want to measure? We need to look at what already exists, as indicator development is often done in comparison to what already exists.
- The 'It's All One Curriculum' and other guidelines have got learning outcomes already specified. The 'Curriculum' focuses on individual level outcomes. In hindsight, the real gap is on indicators rather than on outcomes.
- How can we design a study or research project which will be able to identify comprehensive sexuality education as a contributor to driving these results? For a number of them, the changes could be brought about by a number of activities.
- Our measurements have to be just as complex as the interventions themselves.
- Within educational research, there has been a huge amount of research carried out on health outcomes in schools: note the critical thinking evaluation in 'The Shape Up Project'.
- We need to orientate ourselves towards skills learned or demonstrated. We need to hear more about how we measure skills.

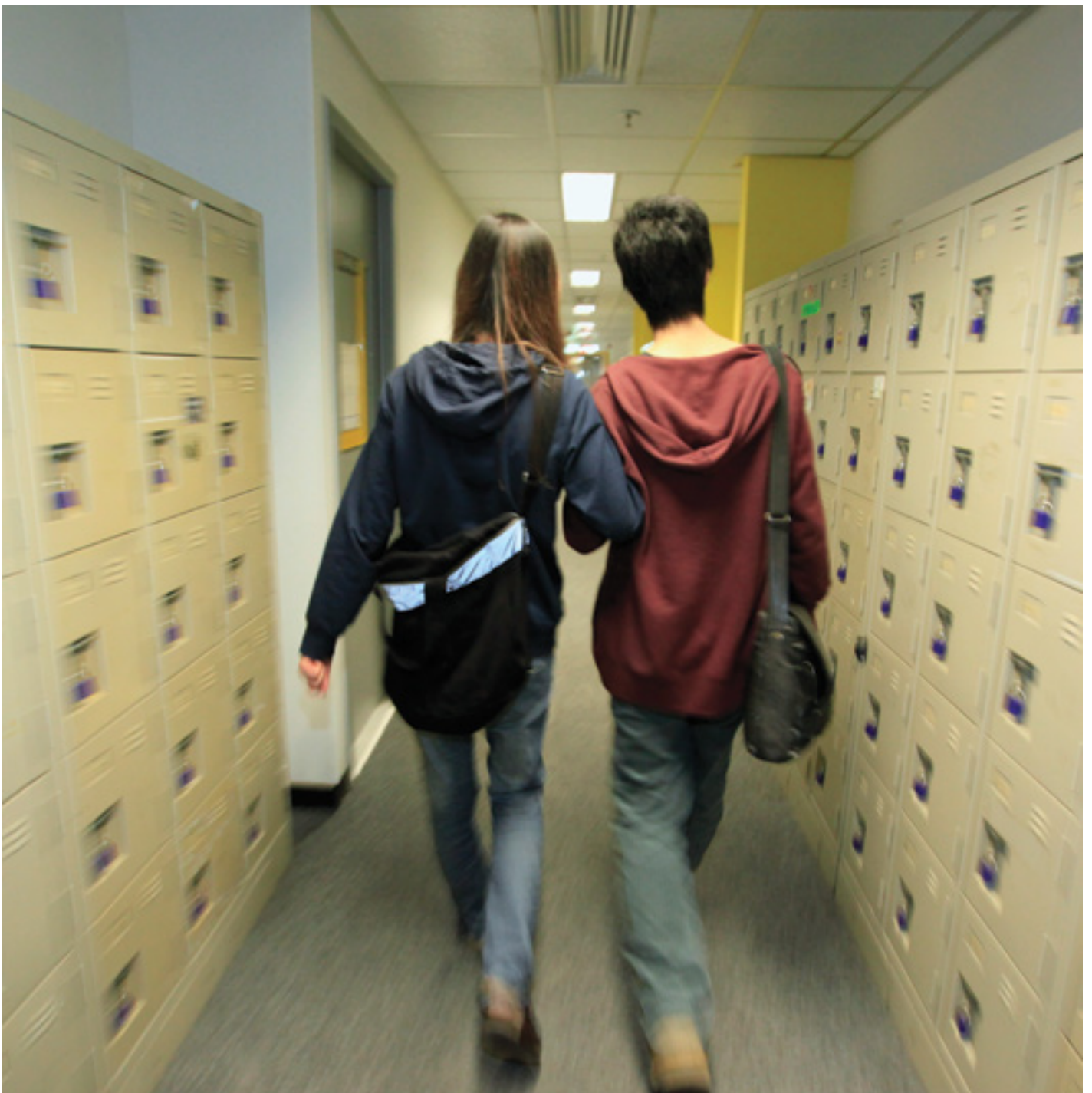


### Areas for further exploration

It was agreed that measuring non-health-based outcomes is important for CSE. It was also agreed that new indicators are necessary. However, the challenges will be how to develop new indicators and agreeing on most strategic outcomes. Who will lead on this work? What is the role of IPPF? What is the role of other stakeholders? How will this work be taken forward?

## 03 Steps to take to complete our journey

We are at the beginning of our journey of exploration. We need to work together to implement strategies to strengthen rights-based approaches to the learning and teaching skills of educators. We also need to develop and test new indicators for effectiveness and impact; explore how to develop effective and continuous communication with parents and community leaders; and discover the best strategies to link comprehensive sexuality education with health and social service provision for young people.





## Action points for IPPF

The discussions over the two days were broad and deep, and by the end of our time together there was a sense of optimism and positive energy.

The final activity was to reflect over the discussions and key points raised and begin to map out next steps for IPPF. Participants worked in groups to identify activities for IPPF and to consider when these activities should be undertaken over a four-year timescale. The following three sections summarize the suggested next steps for IPPF in the short, medium and long term.

### Action for IPPF in the short term

- Facilitate further exploration of different pedagogies with more external input.
- Build stronger relationships with education institutions.
- Develop a consensus document on pedagogy.
- Map out other organizations and expertise in CSE.
- Start the roll-out of a new assessment tool for CSE.
- Map existing resources in IPPF.
- Map what IPPF's Member Associations are actually doing (including methods).

### Action for IPPF in the medium term

- Review and update IPPF's CSE guidelines to take into consideration any new perspectives and positions emerging from the above discussions.
- Provide further support for the implementation of 'It's All One Curriculum'. Each IPPF Regional Office has been inducted in

using the 'Curriculum'. However, Member Associations need methodological and training guidelines for CSE.

- Build the capacity of the Secretariat on critical pedagogy and methods.
- Identify partners for teacher training.
- Start to develop a new strategic plan. The Youth Team must position CSE in the new plan, and indicate clearly where CSE fits in.
- Undertake literature reviews to feed into a position paper for IPPF (for example, look at pedagogical approaches to CSE, methods, how to train teachers, how to transform curriculum into practice – this would focus mainly on process rather than content, and identify which indicators already exist).

### Action for IPPF in the long term

- Assess and generate evidence about peer education training, specifically using critical pedagogy – scale up the most effective approaches.
- Advocate for consensus among key players on goals for comprehensive sexuality education.
- Develop indicators.
- Provide technical assistance to adapt 'It's All One Curriculum' to local contexts.

### Collaboration with other stakeholders

Each participant expressed interest in collaborating with IPPF and the group on specific follow-up actions. IPPF is committed to keeping the participants informed about our progress on these actions and will reach out to them and other stakeholders for collaboration along our journey.

### Final reflections on the two-day meeting...



## Final conclusions

Looking back at this very intensive and fruitful meeting, it is clear that we have only just begun to identify and develop broad conclusions. We are at the beginning of our journey of exploration, both on pedagogy and on comprehensive sexuality education, as well as defining new indicators for success. IPPF commits to continue contributing to international, regional and national dialogues on these important issues for CSE.

Our agenda goes beyond the implementation of current and new guidelines and curricula. We need to work together to implement strategies to strengthen rights-based approaches to the learning and teaching skills of educators. This will not only have a positive effect on sexuality education itself but can be an example for other areas of education inside and outside the school setting.

We need to advance new areas of research. These include developing and testing new indicators for the effectiveness and impact of CSE; examining how best to foster high quality rights-based teaching and learning skills; how to develop effective and continuous communication with parents and community leaders; and the best strategies to link CSE with health and social service provision for young people.

There are, no doubt, many challenges that we will still need to overcome. To be successful we need each other's support together with support from donors, policy makers, teachers, educators, medical professionals and parents. But we should not forget to work in partnership with young people, who are often left out of these discussions. The good news is that we are not starting from scratch. We can capitalize on the advances that have already been made in the fields of sexuality education, young people's rights, sexual and reproductive health, and education more broadly.

IPPF will continue to develop innovative methods and strategies to find answers to what exactly works, when, with whom and why, and which pedagogical methods are needed to make comprehensive sexuality education more effective, enjoyable and acceptable.

Once again, we would like to thank the participants, Anna Martinez and Chelsea Ricker for their all support.



# Appendices



# Appendix 1: List of participants

## Participants

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### **Chelsea Ricker**

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**Leonard Zondetsa** (Youth Advisor East  
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# Appendix 2:

## Key questions and issues explored

DAY 1	
Questions and issues to be explored	Activities used
Ground rules and ways of working. How would you like to work over the next two days? What kind of environment would help you to think and to share your ideas?	Pair discussion, whole group agreement
Thinking back, when did you learn something profound for the first time in your life? What was it? Did you change your world view?  How did you learn it, from whom and where?	Pair discussion  Feedback to whole group
What were the characteristics of the learning experiences that made a difference in people's lives? Make a list – nominate a scribe.  Which characteristics reflect content?  Which characteristics reflect methodology?  Which characteristics reflect educator competence?  Which characteristics reflect environment?	Pairs in groups of four  Scribing and reporting back
Complete the sentence:  "A positive learning experience is one which..."	Groups of four to negotiate and agree a statement
Can these characteristics and principles be applied to CSE?  Are they always applied?  What would a CSE session look like which <b>did not</b> apply these principles? Do you have any examples from real life?  What would a CSE session look like which <b>did</b> apply these principles? Do you have any examples from real life?	Draw and write  Group presentation
What are the consequences to the learner of these scenarios? In other words, what impact will it have on them?	Whole group discussion
The next part of this process is to hear what perspectives other organizations have on pedagogy relating to CSE.  1. What, if any, philosophical position does your organization take in relation to teaching and learning?  2. What pedagogical techniques and methods do you promote or use in your sexuality education programmes – and why?  3. Can you give an example of some of the key methods or techniques that you use?  4. What challenges have you confronted?  5. What are the levers for success with these methods?  6. What unintended results or outcomes emerged from the use of these methods?	Fishbowl with hot seat

What have we learned today? How can we put these approaches into practice?	Socratic discussion in small groups
What challenges do we face when putting these approaches into practice?	Scribing
Feedback – examples of challenges.	Rounds of feedback
What are the levers or opportunities to putting these approaches into practice?	Socratic discussion in small groups Scribing
Feedback – examples of opportunities.	Rounds of feedback
What are the ways forward? What can we do to ensure we can take these approaches on board? What systems or resources and support need to be put into place? Recommendations to IPPF.	Socratic discussion in small groups Scribing

## DAY 2

Questions and issues to be explored	Activities used
What values underpin CSE?	Small group discussion Group consensus building
How do we measure CSE?  How can we improve the way we monitor and evaluate CSE programmes, especially in relation to points discussed on day 1?  What indicators are most effective to measure the process and effect of CSE?  What new indicators should be introduced?  What are the most appropriate methods of monitoring and evaluation?	Group discussion
What would the indicator look like?  How could it be measured at the different levels?	Small group work Scribe Presentation
How was this activity? Easy or difficult?	Round of reflections
Explore what steps need to be taken by IPPF to get to where we want to be. Write these action points onto cards (maximum of four).  Negotiate a timeline when these action points need to be implemented.	Timeline activity
How can your organization contribute to these activities?	Personal reflection
One thing I take away from the past two days is...  I am feeling...	Closing rounds

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# Selected resources

[IPPF and Comprehensive Sexuality Education: Exploring New Territories – Background Paper](#)

Chelsea Ricker

[Framework for Comprehensive Sexuality Education](#)

IPPF

[It's All One Curriculum](#)

Population Council, IPPF, IPPF-WHR, CREA, Girls Power Initiative, IWHC, Mexfam

[International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education: An Evidence-informed Approach for Schools, Teachers and Health Educators](#)

UNESCO

[Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe: A Framework for Policy Makers, Educational and Health Authorities and Specialists](#)

WHO Regional Office for Europe and BZgA

[2010 Report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education](#)

[Advancing Sexuality Education in the Developing World](#)

Guttmacher Institute, IPPF



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