



# RESOLUTION OF THE CONFERENCE

**“Implementing comprehensive  
sexuality education and gender  
equality principles: prospects  
of Ukraine in the 21<sup>st</sup> century”**



MINISTRY  
OF EDUCATION AND  
SCIENCE OF UKRAINE



## **PARTICIPANTS:**

representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, academic and teaching staff from various regions of Ukraine, teachers of higher educational institutions, psychologists, teachers of general secondary education institutions, young pupils and students, representatives of all-Ukrainian non-governmental organizations, foundations and international organizations.

During two discussion panels within the framework of the conference agenda, the conference outlined urgent needs and challenges of comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) implementation in Ukraine amid the education reform and development, presented the key competencies of grade 5-9 education recipients approved in the State Basic Secondary Education Standards and the CSE place among the education fields mentioned in the Standards, discussed findings of the 2019-2020 sociological survey "Awareness and attitudes of teachers and parents to comprehensive sexuality education", raised the issue of nowadays teenagers' sexual culture and values, and highlighted modern views of scientists and practitioners in psychology, pedagogics and social work, civil society representatives, parents and young persons concerning systemic CSE provision in educational institutions.

The Ukrainian Government's agenda for education reform provides for the creation in each educational institution of a safe, comfortable, modern and inclusive educational space through teaching of youth according to the competence-based approach and advanced training of teaching staff.

Considering the 2016-2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), namely Target 3.7 (By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes) of Goal 3 "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages", Target 5.6 ("Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their

review conferences”) of Goal 5 “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”, Article 13 (The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice) and Article 19 (States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child) of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) ratified by the UN member states, and the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, guided by the Constitution of Ukraine and the Laws of Ukraine “On Education”, “On General Secondary Education”, “On Pre-School Education”, “On After-School Education”, and “On Protection of Childhood”, taking account of the Family Code of Ukraine, the Concept of Personality Education in the Ukrainian Statehood Development Context, the Concept of Children and Youth Rearing in the National Education System, the Conceptual Basics of Humanitarian Education in Ukraine (Higher School), the National Education Development Doctrine, the National Strategy for Development of a Safe and Health Educational Environment in the New Ukrainian School (2020), and other legislative and regulatory documents, and being aware of importance of implementing the comprehensive sexuality education and gender equality principles in Ukraine, the conference participants have recognized that:

**1** An urgent need exists in Ukraine for ensuring harmonious development of children, teenagers and young people with account of their psychophysiology knowledge, psychoemotional development, age specifics, and age-appropriate physiological puberty standards, including knowledge about hygiene, safety and assertiveness skills based on respect and self-respect, equality and inclusiveness.

This need can be met to a great extent by applying the UNESCO’s international recommendations (International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education, 2018) which include all the above-listed aspects in the notion of comprehensive sexuality education – “a curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality. It aims to equip children and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to: realize their health, well-being and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others; and, understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives”.<sup>1</sup>

**2** Providing sexual education and upbringing in Ukraine should be a scientifically grounded, comprehensive, continuous educational process implemented on a step-by-step basis, which is appropriate to age and development of education recipients, integrated in a cross-cutting way into curricula with account of state education standards. This process should empower pupils, both girls and boys, to obtain reliable, exhaustive and accurate information about the above-listed sexuality aspects, based on respect and self-respect, dignity, human rights, equality, inclusiveness and national

1. UNESCO, 2018. International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education, p. 16.

specifics, able to develop in girls and boys the skills necessary to make decisions promoting preservation of physical and mental health.

**3** Comprehensive sexuality education should consist of the following thematic units:

- relationships (family; friendship, love and romantic relationships; tolerance, inclusion and respect; long-term commitments and parenting);
- values, rights, culture and sexuality (values and sexuality; human rights and sexuality; culture, society and sexuality);
- understanding gender (the social construction of gender and gender norms; gender equality, stereotypes and bias; gender-based violence);
- violence and staying safe (violence; culture of consent and assertiveness, privacy and bodily integrity; safe use of information and communication technologies);
- skills for health and well-being (norms and peer influence on sexual behaviour; decision-making; communication, refusal and negotiation skills; media literacy and sexuality; finding help and support);
- the human body and development (sexual and reproductive anatomy and physiology; reproduction; puberty; body image);
- sexuality and sexual behaviour (sex, sexuality and the sexual life cycle; sexual behaviour and sexual responsibility);
- sexual and reproductive health (pregnancy and pregnancy prevention; understanding, recognizing and reducing the risk of STIs,

including HIV; HIV and AIDS care, treatment and support, and stigma).

**4** Comprehensive sexual education of education recipients should be implemented simultaneously through cross-cutting integration into the education content and thematic courses in curricula, based on common principles and approaches for the entire environment of children, teenagers and young persons, with no exception: all levels of education as well as after-school and adult education (including post-graduate education), health care facilities, civil society sector, family, mass media, etc. All the sources creating an information, educational, and correctional development space for comprehensive sexuality education should supplement each other.

**5** Participants of formal and informal comprehensive sexuality education should include specially trained competent teaching (psychological teaching, academic) staff, education recipients and their parents as well as experts involved from other fields who enjoy confidence and respect among children, teenagers and young persons.

**6** Competence of the experts involved in the implementation of comprehensive sexuality education programmes assumes having special knowledge in psychophysiology and psychoemotional development, sexuality formation stages, age specifics and age-appropriate physiological puberty standards, including knowledge about hygiene, safety and assertiveness skills based on respect and self-respect, equality and inclusiveness, and having occupational abilities and skills of communication with teenagers, motivation and personal qualities.

**7** Comprehensive sexual education has proven long-term impact on the young people's knowledge and behaviour concerning mental, reproductive and sexual health, in particular later sexual life, more frequent use of contraception, and less risky behaviour.<sup>2,3</sup>

Based on the foregoing, and taking into account of the current state education policy, the ideas and proposals presented in the reports and speeches by the conference and plenary discussion participants, and guided by Article 3 of the Constitution of Ukraine according to which the human being, his or her life and health, honour and dignity, inviolability and security are recognized in Ukraine as the highest social value, the conference participants propose that

### **the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine shall:**

- Form and approve the composition of an interdepartmental working group under the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine to develop and further implement

the Concept of Comprehensive Sexuality Education of Children and Youth in Ukraine, considering the criteria suggested by the conference participants (Annex 1);

- Define terms of reference for the interdepartmental working group for development of the Concept of CSE of Children and Youth in Ukraine, considering proposals by the conference participants (Annex 2);
- Noting the importance of CSE knowledge in vocational training of future teachers, consider possible inclusion of the list of occupational competences, knowledge, abilities and skills of comprehensive sexuality education in the Occupational Standard for the occupations "Primary grade teacher of a general secondary education institution" and "Teacher of a general education institution" (Annex 3).

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2. D. Kirby, 2007. Research findings on programs to reduce teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Available at: <https://powertodecide.org/sites/default/files/resources/primary-download/emerging-answers.pdf>

3. UNESCO, 2018. International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education, pp. 28-31.

# ANNEX 1

## THE WORKING GROUP COMPOSITION AND WORK ORGANIZATION CRITERIA

The conference participants propose to consider the following criteria for the formation of quantitative and qualitative composition of the working group for development of the Concept of CSE of Children and Youth in Ukraine:

**1** Include in the interdepartmental working group representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (directorates of all education levels), the Ukrainian Institute for Education Development, the Ukrainian Scientific and Methodological Centre of Practical Psychology and Social Work, the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine, the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, the Public Health Centre of Ukraine, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, the Ministry of Social Policy (service for children/children in difficult life circumstances), the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, international organizations, non-governmental organizations engaged in the field of education and health, the Educational Ombudsman's Service, the Office of the Government Commissioner for Gender Policy, resource centres for inclusive education support, non-governmental organizations of parents and youth, and lawyers (in the field of children's rights and international protection of children's rights).

**2** Ministries and agencies must recommend the following experts to be included in the interdepartmental working group for development of the Concept of CSE of Children and Youth under the MES of Ukraine:

- child and family psychologist;
- gynaecologist specializing in work with children and teenagers;
- andrologist specializing in work with children and teenagers;
- lawyer / expert in international law and protection of children's rights.

**3** Ministries and agencies should recommend the experts to be included in the interdepartmental working group for development of the Concept of CSE of Children and Youth under the MES of Ukraine who:

- have conscious motivation for CSE implementation in Ukraine, experience and understanding of the subject and of importance of the comprehensive, systemic approach;
- have a proactive attitude to life, and are not indifferent to qualitative changes in education and upbringing of children, teenagers and youth;
- possess teamworking skills, are willing to promote implementation of the Concept in their sectors of influence and to popularize CSE in Ukraine, use a non-discriminatory approach in their work, and understand gender equality principles.

# ANNEX 2

## TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE INTERDEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP

The conference participants propose to include the following items in the terms of reference of the interdepartmental working group for development of the National CSE Concept:

- 1 Develop and approve the group's rules of procedure, in particular the procedure for adoption of decisions, approval of the drafted documents, provisions, principles, recommendations, etc.
- 2 Develop, coordinate and approve the structure of the Concept of Comprehensive Sexuality Education of Children, Teenagers and Youth in Ukraine.
- 3 Develop the draft Concept of CSE of Children, Teenagers and Youth in Ukraine according to the approved structure.
- 4 Analyze the content of pre-school, primary, basic and field-specific secondary education for inclusion of the key CSE notions.
- 5 Develop a roadmap and paramount priorities for implementation of comprehensive sexuality education of children and teenagers in Ukraine.
- 6 Develop requirements to training and criteria of selection of experts for implementation of comprehensive sexuality education.
- 7 Develop indicators for monitoring of professional excellence of specialists in CSE implementation in Ukraine.
- 8 Develop indicators for efficiency monitoring and evaluation of formal and informal comprehensive sexuality education programmes for children, teenagers and youth.
- 9 Develop recommendations on implementation of a special CSE course for higher educational institutions, post-graduate pedagogical education institutes / continuous education academies and professional development centres for teaching staff concerning implementation of a special CSE course, and hold consultations.
- 10 Develop recommendations for social service centres for family, children and youth as well as youth centres in Ukraine concerning CSE implementation mechanisms.

# ANNEX 3

## RECOMMENDED LIST

of knowledge, abilities and skills in comprehensive sexuality education for inclusion in occupational competences under the Occupational Standard for the occupations “Primary grade teacher of a GSEI” and “Teacher of a GSEI”

### **B** Partner interaction with educational process actors

#### **B1. Psychological competence**

B11. Ability to identify, and consider in the educational process, age specifics of pupils.

##### Knowledge:

B11Z1. Age specifics, psychophysiological and psychoemotional development of pupils, age-appropriate physiological puberty standards.

B12Z1. Psychosexual development (sexuality, formation stages, sexual relationships, sexual behaviour, self-respect, equality).

##### Abilities and skills:

B11U1. Consider age specifics of psychophysiological and psychoemotional development of pupils in the educational process to ensure its effectiveness.

B11U2. Consider age specifics of psychophysiological and psychoemotional development of pupils during selection of content, methods, means and forms of training in educational fields.

B12U1. Consider specifics of psychosexual development of pupils during selection of content, methods, means and forms of training in educational fields.

#### **B1. Psychological competence**

B13. Ability to use the strategies of working with pupils that promote development of their ego identity and positive self-esteem.

##### Knowledge:

B13Z1. Building one’s own identity (self-identification), understanding one’s own uniqueness.

B13Z2. Sexual identification, stereotypes of sexual behaviour and sexual relationships.

##### Abilities and skills:

B13U1. Create conditions for pupils’ building their own identity and understanding their uniqueness and their own model of the world.

B13U2. Use key strategies of work with pupils that promote their understanding of their own uniqueness, self-identification, sexual behaviour, responsibility, and equality.

#### **B2. Emotional ethical competence**

B23. Ability to realize and appraise interdependence of people and systems in the global world.

##### Knowledge:

B23Z2. Sexual culture, sexual culture differences between various communities, conflict prevention, mastering of sexual culture norms, creation of a safe, inclusive and tolerant educational environment.

#### Abilities and skills:

B23U2. Communicate with account of a society's sexual culture specifics and personal differences between interlocutors, showing equality and respect, and promote safety and reconciliation.

### **V Organization of a healthy, safe, developing and inclusive educational environment**

#### **V2. Health-preserving competence**

V22. Ability to take measures for preservation of pupils' sexual and reproductive health, and for comprehensive sexuality education.

#### Knowledge:

V22Z1. Sexual behaviour standards, HIV/STI prevention; HIV and AIDS care, treatment and support, stigma; pregnancy and pregnancy prevention.

V22Z2. Skills necessary for health, well-being and gender equality.

#### Abilities and skills:

V22U1. Undertake educational activities for prevention of behavioural risk factors.

V22U2. Create an informational, educational, and correctional development space for health, well-being and gender equality.

