

You are the salt of the earth  
You are the light of the world  
let your light shine before others  
and glorify your Father in heaven

# Salt & Light

March 2022



It's a bit too late to say 'Happy New year' so instead - welcome to our first 2022 newsletter!

We are so happy to be sharing more encouraging stories with you from our work in 2021. Another strange and sometimes difficult year because of Covid-19 - but, with your amazing support, so many people have been supported and many lives have been transformed.

2021 was also an amazing year of provision in a time when charities have been struggling financially. Thank you so much for your part in this provision!

One example of this was the Big Give Christmas Challenge in December. Together we beat our £24K target, raising almost £29,000! We also had more people take part - 112 compared to 89

the previous year. We were so thankful to see your fundraising efforts including Stephanie's 10K run dressed as a Shining Star, Ben's tennis keepy-uppy challenge, and Rachel's 'win an elf for a day' raffle - all in return for their friends' donations through the Big Give!

If you would like to fundraise for us this year, we'd love to hear from you.

## 35 years of acet UK!

Can you believe it? Next year will be 35 years since acet UK started and we are hoping to mark the event with a special, black-tie, fundraising dinner - and you're invited!

We are in the process of booking the beautiful Kew Gardens as the venue, so do let us know if you think it's something you would come to. We know not all of you are close to London, but are hoping that advanced notice will help you plan.

At the moment we have two options, a venue that holds 80 and one that holds 120, so it would be really helpful if you would drop us a line if you think you would attend so that we can choose accordingly? We'd hate for any of you to miss out on this prestigious event.

Tickets will be around £80 per person and there will be canapés on the lawn, dinner, music, a charity auction, and, of course, dancing!



We would love you to come with your family or friends so please email [info@acet-uk.com](mailto:info@acet-uk.com) with the number of people in the subject line. The event will be in mid-May, on a weekend, we will confirm the date in the next newsletter!

Looking forward to seeing you there and meeting you in person.

## Nigeria homework support

As well as their Esteem Clubs for older children, ACET Nigeria trains and supports volunteers to run Children's Clubs for those between the ages of 5 and 12.

16 new Children's Clubs were formed in the latter half of 2021, adding to the existing 40 clubs, expanding this outreach in underserved, rural areas considerably, enabling ACET to now reach 1,688 children.

The clubs provide a safe place for children to play, make friends, develop relationship skills, and learn how to keep themselves healthy. The clubs also provide much-needed homework support, helping the children consolidate and understand their learning from school.

The children often feedback that they get much more attention during homework support at the clubs than they do at school (the average school class size in Nigeria is 51, with some states reporting much higher numbers).

“

My grandparents take care of me and feed me well. When I was with my father and my step-mother I hardly ate and no one used to bath me.

Children's Club taught me how to bath, to be clean, and take care of my body. I learnt that the only way one can know he has no HIV is to go for HIV testing.

Before Children's Club, I did not have confidence in my abilities because I am small but now I have confidence that I can do many things.

I now believe that both boys and girls can work around the house, go to school and do any job they choose to do. Girls and boys are equal in value. I have learnt to cook, I hope to be a caterer.

Even though the homework support from the Children's Club takes my time of rest at home, it is very helpful because I understand more here than at school.

I feel safe and happy here as I know an adult who I can trust and talk to if I am having issues.”



10-year-old Eric

## Ukraine club activities

Most young people first come into contact with ACET Ukraine when their school invites ACET in to deliver their 'University of Health Youth' programme. Many students then go on to join one of ACET Ukraine's youth clubs, which help teenagers take responsibility for their future, be part of a team and become socially active.

Lockdowns did impact the clubs last year but 203 ACET volunteers were still able to run sessions of 15 clubs in 9 cities for 2,040 young people.

Two of the clubs are based around football: apart from football training, the clubs give opportunities to discuss spiritual and emotional issues and the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

ACET Jump club in Vinnitsa also organised a football Olympics last year.



16-year-old Danilo lives in Sutiska and attends an ACET Ukraine football club.

“ I heard about ACET at the university of Healthy Youth. There were several very important sessions that greatly changed my life. I wanted to learn more so I started going along to club meetings. ACET does a lot for people like me. I attended various sessions and also played football with ACET.

I already met a girl and we thought that soon we will have sex. Of course, I knew I needed a condom – we thought that a condom solves all problems. But we have now decided to wait to have sex until

we are ready and to always be faithful to each other.

I thought that HIV was always deadly and that only drug addicts get sick. ACET taught me that anyone can catch HIV.

I've found people I can trust. I can ask a personal question to an ACET volunteer and hear the truth and advice. I have realised that you can live differently and really enjoy life, that it is possible to live without alcohol and smoking and at the same time be a normal, cool person.

”



## Opening doors ACET Slovakia

It was so encouraging to hear news from Petra, an ACET Slovakia educator from Nitra, about closed doors being opened.

*"In October, a teacher from the village of Rybník called me to come to their school to provide sessions about bullying and relationships. I told my colleague, Monika, as it is right next to the village where she lives. Monika told me that she was surprised that this school contacted me and explained to me that she has offered sessions to this school before, but that the door was always closed there.*

*Monika has been praying for this and other schools in the area for a few years, and the door opened! I spent a wonderful time with the precious students of this school, it had a very pleasant atmosphere and the students worked well together.*

*Shortly afterwards, the deputy director from the school in the next village called me having heard that I had given lectures at the school in Rybník. Now I also give lectures in Starý Tekov!"*



## ACET Czech Republic

František, the director of ACET Czech Republic, sent us a brief update on their 2021.

“ In the first 6 months of 2021, we offered online courses and lectures as an alternative as we were not able to go to classrooms. After the summer break, we entered schools again physically, with fresh passion and determination. In spite of the fact of the difficult situation, our educators talked to 46, 986 students in 2021.

If we aggregate the total number since the beginning of ACET CZ in 1994, we have reached 1, 603, 298 students! ”

## Shining Star, Zimbabwe

An important aspect of Shining Star's model is its welcoming and family-style dynamic. As well as training on sexual health, vocational skills and business skills, and monthly meetings to share and report back on their outreach, the peer educators also take part in team building exercises – and have the opportunity to attend an annual weekend camp.

Last year, Shining Star project ran outdoor team building activities. 26 peer educators spent the day at the park enjoying various games where they had to communicate well and work together, strengthening their bond.



19-year-old peer educator Sarah explains how Shining Star has become like a family to her.

“

I lost my parents in 2002 and they left me with two siblings to take care of. Life became so hard that I had no choice but to venture into sex work, which is what I have been doing to earn a living. I didn't manage to complete my education.

After entering sex work, my life has been a big challenge, my relatives disowned me, the community labelled me and called me all sorts of bad names. I had no hope, the only things I thought of was to make money, find sugar daddies, go to Vuzu parties\*.

Shining Star welcomed me and never judged me. I learnt self-confidence, to make independent decisions and not be pressurised by anyone. I was empowered to have wisdom to know right from wrong.

I learnt that talking is therapy. Bottling up issues leads to mental health issues. I have potential to be a great person, I now have a positive attitude towards myself, others and life in general. The project also financed

my studies and I wrote my 'O' level exams in 2021. I now have dreams and I want to study further in IT.

Without Shining Star? It brings me tears to think about it, I would be still wandering the streets. Most probably I would be immersed deep in sex work as it seemed the only option I had at that time.

May you continue to spread this love to others who will come after us. Let's continue to grow this family and may your doors be forever open.”

*\*Vuzu parties involve unprotected sex races – youths have sex with at least 10 others in order to be crowned King or Queen. At Vuzu 'Blessed' parties, drug pushers test the efficacy of their drugs on young people.*

# Making a difference in Southwark schools

We are delighted to share that, despite the challenges of Covid-19, **we reached 2,248 students in Southwark in 2021**, significantly exceeding our target of 1,500 – as we were able to continue delivering our sessions online via live video link during the school lockdown in the Spring term.

As always, we have been very encouraged by the young people's engagement in the sessions.

In November, we delivered a self-esteem lesson to a group of girls at Compass School, Bermondsey. During the lesson, one girl said that two days before, another girl said she was ugly and she couldn't get it out of her mind.

Our Schools Worker, Rachel, explained that sometimes people who are hurt, hurt other people. She encouraged her to build herself up and focus on what is good and true about herself.

On the feedback form at the end of the lesson, the girl wrote that she learnt that she shouldn't listen to

the 'haters', and she gave the lesson 10/10.

We always aim to increase young people's knowledge, skills and confidence in wise and healthy decision-making. We also aim to change any negative or harmful attitudes. We are so pleased that we have a demonstrable impact on both

"It was interactive and taught us vital things to keep us safe in a relationship."

an  
and

individual

"I learnt not to send nudes to anyone because it could be leaked."

collective  
level.

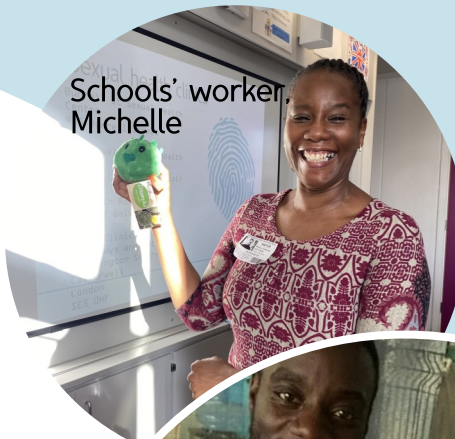
"I found it useful as I learnt that a lot of things I thought were ok, are not ok."



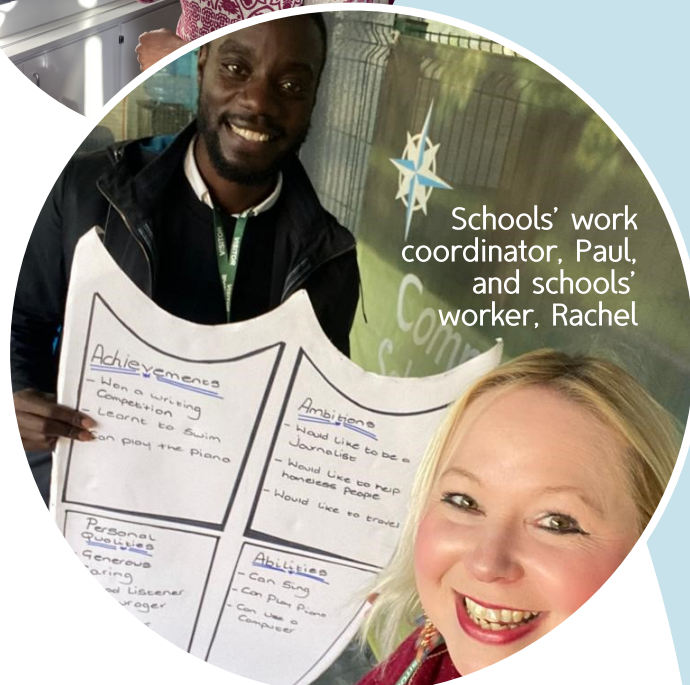
## One-to-One work

After successfully working with a male student on an individual basis following a request from one of our partner schools, the school asked us to carry out a one-to-one intervention with another boy. He had been involved in sending sexually aggressive messages to a girl in his class. The messages were so serious that the police had to be involved and another boy was excluded and moved to a different school. Our male Schools Worker, Paul, worked with the student, delivering our Boys' Project.

The boy gave sensible answers when they had discussions, but Paul was then able to challenge him on why his online actions were not in line with what he was saying his values were. Through the discussion, the boy realised that his online actions are as significant as his in-person actions, and that his behaviour needs to correspond with what he wants his values to be. Our schools worker, Rachel, was also able to have a one-to-one session with the girl who reported him, to support her and explore what her needs were as a result of the incident.



Schools' worker  
Michelle



Schools' work  
coordinator, Paul,  
and schools'  
worker, Rachel

# Expanding the Esteem network through technology

With the help of our amazing donors, we have been able to scale up our online offer to youth workers during the pandemic to enable them to reach young people with quality sessions that improve their relational and emotional wellbeing.

By offering our accredited training online (with agreement from Open College Network West Midlands), we have been able to deliver quality relationships and sex education training to significantly more people than expected! We were aiming to train 72 educators in 2021, but in fact we almost doubled this - reaching 136 educators!

For this to happen, we needed to massively improve our technical equipment to meet the demands of online training. Thanks to a generous grant, we were able to purchase audio headsets, mics, webcams, appropriate lighting and green screens for our trainers.

In addition, the grant enabled us to send the 136 trainees physical resources for them to use during the training and with the young people they work with. This included our acclaimed resource #Isitok?, developed with Youthscape to help young people think about the risks of sexting.

We were also able to buy a laser cutter and we are excited that we can now produce so many different training resources, making our offerings much more robust and long lasting.

As a result of our bumper year of training, our Esteem Network now comprises 240 members who are passionate about delivering quality relationships and sex education to the young people they work with.

Through the network, we have reached more than 35,000 young people across the UK last year.



Trainees with items from the training pack



Gareth delivering online training



## Here's some feedback from young people our members reached in 2021:

"It was a good thing to be told about porn - often sex education in schools is very inadequate. The stats presented enabled me to gain a better understanding of the negatives of the porn industry."

Year 12 girl, North East

"I feel better about myself. You have made me realise what I am worth."

Year 7 student, Twickenham

"I will use what I have learnt from this workshop to help me whenever I am feeling stressed or upset."

Primary Student, Weston-super-Mare

"A positive message from this lesson was to always acknowledge and be open about boundaries. There's no reason to feel guilty for setting boundaries and not giving consent."

Year 9 girl, Newcastle

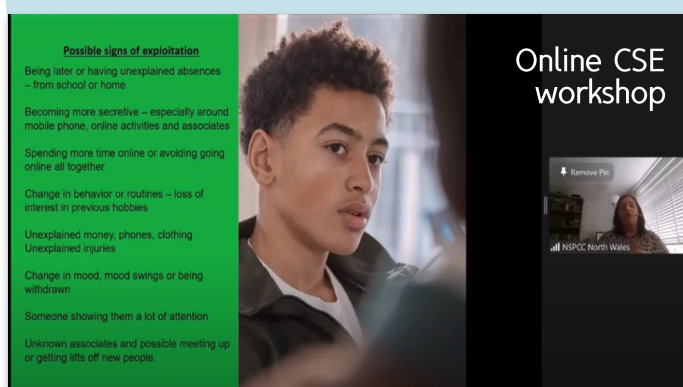
## Supporting our members

After accessing our training in relationships and sex education, trainees then become members of our Esteem network of RSE educators. One of the ways we continue to support them in their RSE delivery is to provide online skills workshops on a range of subjects.

Last year, we were able to run 9 online live skills workshops for our members.

The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, especially as it helped members to feel connected and supported during such an isolating time. Topics included how to create digital resources, addressing child sexual exploitation (with a guest speaker from the NSPCC), and how to create quality lesson plans.

Here is some of the feedback.



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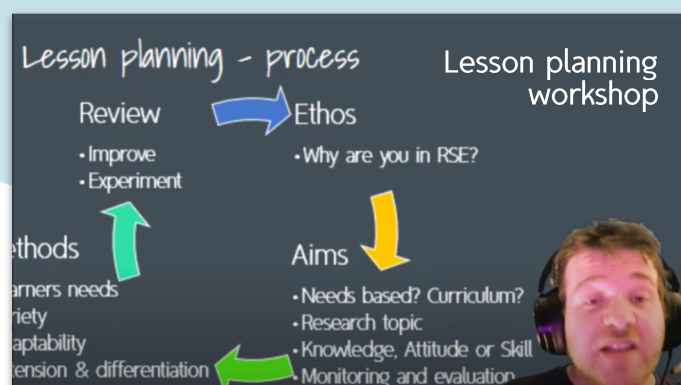
I have found the live skill workshops incredibly helpful, especially around using technology to create materials and deliver remote lessons. I also really enjoyed learning to use OBS, as well as some really useful think tank discussion opportunities and the CSE (child sexual exploitation) workshop. I really appreciate the way we were given support and a chance to grow new skills during this challenging time.

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The workshops have been very helpful. Particularly the workshops looking at adapting workshops to be delivered online. They helped me to adapt our parent/carer workshops to be delivered online. Also found the workshops looking at planning for post-pandemic very helpful.

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US

01244 566111

info@acet-uk.com

www.acet-uk.com

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