

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  
March 2024



## Let's Talk About... Equipping RSE practitioners

Young people want to talk about relationships and sex – but what do they specifically want to talk about?

To help youth practitioners kick-start these conversations, with your support, we were pleased to launch a new RSE resource at the National Youth Ministry Weekend in November.

Let's Talk About... is a deck of cards with 4 games that grow young people's confidence in discussing key relationships and sex topics in a fun, low-pressure, and youth-led way, covering anatomy, relationships, emotions, sex, technology, and more.

The pack is now available in the shop on the acet UK website at £18 including UK P&P. There is also a £6 expansion pack for use with church groups, which has been craftily designed to fit neatly into the Let's Talk About... box.

Both packs are available to buy as a bundle at a discounted combined price of £22 (a saving of £2).



You helped our accredited training continue strongly in 2023 with 7 courses training 94 new educators. With 24 hours of teaching time, the course includes an option to gain a level 4 accreditation in 'Teaching Relationships and Sex Education.'

One of the amazing things about delivering most of these courses online means it is accessible to anyone no matter where they are geographically – as long as they can cope with any time difference that creates! 10 of the 94 trainees were not UK-based and now 9% of our Esteem network is based in another country, with members as far afield as Brazil, Japan, South Africa, and Malaysia.

"Each day was packed with information, activities & plenty of opportunity for in-depth discussion & endless 'no-holds-barred' questions - invaluable as facilitating RSE sessions with young people is something you want to go into as prepared as possible!"

## Oxford, UK

### Equipping teachers

Relationships Education is statutory in primary schools, and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is statutory at secondary level. School teachers are expected to deliver these lessons in addition to their own subject specialities and we find that many feel woefully ill-equipped and out of their comfort zone! That's why we are passionate about supporting them so that the children in their schools receive engaging, informative lessons from confident, knowledgeable RSE educators.

Although we do have school teaching staff attending our accredited course so that they can access the level 4 accreditation in 'Teaching Relationships and Sex Education', we also offer a 1-day condensed course specifically written for teachers, as well as half-day workshops.

Thanks to your support, Paul was recently able to provide a secondary school in Oxford with a bespoke workshop for 11 of their teachers. They looked at key aspects of the current government statutory guidance for RSE and Paul guided them through some activity ideas of how they could facilitate great lessons around topics such as healthy relationships, STIs, and online naked picture sharing.

While Paul was busy in the secondary part of the school, Rachel was busy training teachers of the primary classes to help them provide their younger children with engaging Relationships Education lessons!

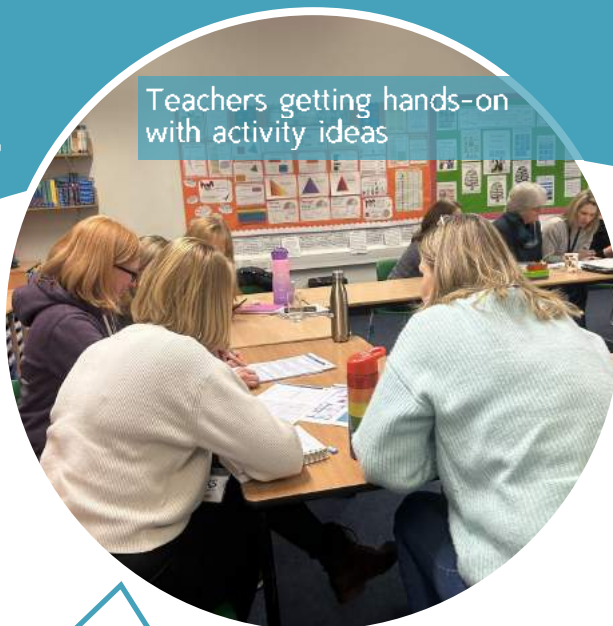
Rachel helped the teachers understand the government guidance and what learning outcomes needed to be covered by the end of KS2. They had *a lot* of questions about what the government guidance *specifically* says about the topics that should be taught at primary level.

It was also interesting to see them learn new things from this session: for instance, they were surprised to learn how early girls can start their periods.

The teachers enjoyed getting hands-on with some of Rachel's suggested activity ideas for the five Relationships Education topics as well as two Health Education topics: Mental Well-being and The Changing Adolescent Body.



Rachel (right) delivering primary teacher training



Teachers getting hands-on with activity ideas

Just wanted to say thank you for your workshop yesterday. The teachers found it very helpful.

Safeguarding Lead

The session was very informative and engaging with great resources.

Pastoral Lead



# London, UK

## Celebrating diversity

Thanks to your generous donations, Rachel has been busy with the continued development of the primary school part of our new racial identity programme. She's been delivering a series of sessions and refining the materials and content in response to feedback from children and teachers.

The children show great maturity when reasoning in these sessions. They discuss the need for having lessons like these that celebrate racial identity and challenge racism as **they recognise that racism is a behaviour that is learned**. These lessons celebrate diversity and foster alternative, inclusive behaviours.

The lessons provide a safe place for the children to talk openly about their own experiences of racism and explore and identify the difference between 'banter' and bullying, and what it looks like to be an ally of someone experiencing racism and prejudice.

The children look at facts about the history of racism; learn more about important BAME figures in society; discuss the issue of stereotyping; and explore what it means to have unconscious bias.

Through interactive activities and artwork, they celebrate different cultural traditions, clothing, food, and names, and share about their own family customs and heritage.

Finally, the children learn about the past lack of diversity in the media and how some people are working to change this, with magazines like Cocoa Girl. They talk about **why it's important to see people like themselves represented onscreen and in magazines**, and then create magazine covers as a final celebration of their own unique identity!



A magazine cover design



Interactive activity



### Student feedback:

I loved the teacher, she was very cheerful. It was fun and there were lots of activities to do. Amazing, kind, helpful.

I liked it because it makes you become a better person. I liked learning what's right and I learnt some new things.

It helped me realise how different we all are. I learnt about my friend. I liked that it said everyone is perfect as they are!



## ACET Nigeria

### Saying NO to child marriage

It is estimated that there are 22 million child brides in Nigeria. That's more than double the population of London! 43% of Nigerian girls are married before they turn 18 and, in one northern state, it is much higher - 89% are married *before they even turn 15*.

Child marriage is driven by cultural norms, such as marrying daughters off at an early age to ensure they are virgins to retain family honour, and gender inequality - the belief that girls are somehow inferior to boys. Girls are far from being equal partners within these marriages: they are forced to drop out of school; and often get pregnant when they are still children themselves.

Child marriage is also exacerbated by illiteracy and poverty: child marriages

are arranged to lessen the financial burden on their family, or as an alliance to improve its economic status.

Additionally, and most alarmingly, the legal age of consent for sexual activity in Nigeria is just 11 years of age: the lowest age of consent in the world.

This gender inequality is a significant driver of Nigeria's high HIV burden and low school attendance, and negatively impacts the country's economic growth, as it interferes with girls' education. These girls are literally being stopped from developing the skills they need to gain financial independence and fulfil their potential.

*By the time she was 15, Obioma was already married to a 60-year-old man. He was her teacher who'd raped her in her first year at secondary school. She stopped attending school and, now pregnant, was kicked out by her enraged family. Obioma had no choice but to move in with the teacher.*



Obioma

With your help, ACET Nigeria is working hard across 4 states, to challenge child marriage and gender inequality by training community leaders as educators and safeguarding leads, and by creating safe environments for children at their Children's and Esteem Clubs to address these difficult topics through memorable, interactive activities, games and discussions.

The children learn that girls and boys are equal, can do the same roles and should have the same opportunities.

They are empowered to delay sex, keep themselves safe and have goals and aspirations.



Ezichi

17 year old Ezichi attends an ACET Nigeria Esteem Club

“ I learnt that any relationship that seeks to push me in to early sex and marriage is not a healthy relationship, I should choose people that respect me, are honest, faithful and that I can trust. I now have confidence to say no to people when they say things like suggesting sex to me. ”



# ACET Nigeria

## Homework support

It might seem strange that ACET Nigeria's club leaders also help the children with school work but consider this:

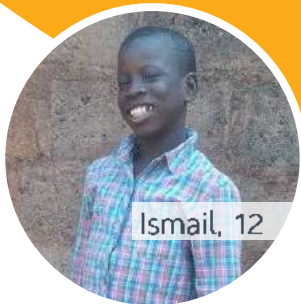
UNICEF reports that 1 in every 5 of the world's out-of-school children is in Nigeria.

Even though primary education is officially free (and compulsory!) in Nigeria, 39% of 6-11 year-olds do NOT regularly attend school. 70 percent of 10-year-olds in Nigeria cannot read well, which fuels further school dropout.

Gender inequality and the issue with child marriages mean that girls are affected the most: more than half of Nigerian girls are not in school.

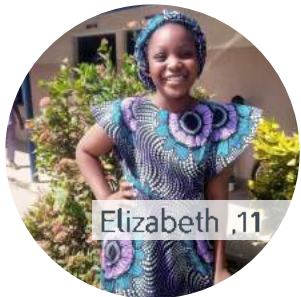
Despite this, Nigerian schools are overcrowded. The average class size is 51 with one state reporting on average 101 pupils per class! You can imagine the impact this has on teaching quality and availability of learning materials, never mind behaviour management - and the safety implications.

One of the things ACET Nigeria's Children's and Esteem clubs provide is much-needed homework support. The smaller group sizes mean that the children get more space, time and attention to help them better understand their learning from school. Thank you so much for supporting this valuable work!



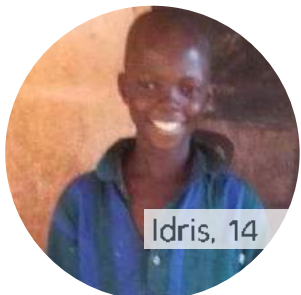
Ismail, 12

It has helped me a lot cause I no longer receive the cane for not doing my homework. It has changed my life academically. I now see the implications of lying and fighting and am working very hard to stop.



Elizabeth, 11

I am always supported by my facilitator in doing my assignments and other issues that have to do with my academic performance. Now, in school, I do ask questions that help. I can now write and speak better.



Idris, 14

I learnt that is good to study and practice my work, it helps me in school and in writing tests. It keeps my brain alert.



Adaku, 12

I get help to explain any assignment given to me. I came from a school that didn't teach well, and the teachers teach in the Tiv language, to a new school where they speak only English. It is the ACET homework support that helped in my assignments.

# ACET Ukraine

Bringing hope in wartime

It's now over 2 years since the start of the war in Ukraine. We are so humbled by the resilience of our ACET Ukraine colleagues whose determination to continue serving young people is incredibly inspiring. Thank you so much for your support which enables and encourages them in these difficult circumstances

347 of ACET Ukraine's faithful volunteers have been able to continue their mission to deliver high-quality relationships and sexual health education and other important life skills education to young people in schools, youth clubs and churches across 14 regions.

Their new 'Teens and Joy' project has been going from strength to strength, with hundreds of young people receiving individual and group counselling sessions to assist them in navigating the difficulties associated with living in a wartime environment.

8 interactive thematic sessions help teenagers to overcome psychological trauma, prevent PTSD, restore their internal resources, look at life positively, and plan life and a bright future ahead. Many relationships have become frayed due to the stress of war, so the course also supports the young people to improve relationships with their relatives, become socially active and to value their own lives.

The course has been requested not only by schools, but also by churches, children's camps and hospitals.



Alina, Tanya & Nastya



At the 'No Filters' youth club

Nastya and Alina live with their foster family. They had to move when their home and school were destroyed by bombing.

“ When we arrived in Zhytomyr, we were in a state of shock. It was scary both night and day. We have experienced a lot of terrible things. Every alarm that sounded reverberated in me like an electric current. When I went to my new school, I didn't know anyone there. It was hard for me to make friends with others. Coach Tanya invited me and my sister, Alina, to the girls' club, 'No Filters'. It was like home at the club; even better. I could ask questions that had bothered me for years. The club has become a place of recreation, friendship and a new life for me. We talked about respect. I analysed my condition and realized that I had no respect even for myself. I started taking better care of myself and threw away my e-cigarette.

”



## Zimbabwe

### Shining Stars: the class of 2023

In Zimbabwe, women are marginalized and disadvantaged because of their gender, especially if they are living with HIV and in poverty. Social-economic injustice has forced many into sex work, because it seems to be their only way of survival.

Each year, your support enables the Shining Star project to recruit a new group of these ladies and train them as sexual health peer educators, so they can empower their peers with knowledge that will help protect them from HIV, STIs and gender-based violence.

Your support also helps provide the Shining Star ladies with business and vocational training, helping them create pathways out of sex work, make positive changes in their lives and address the issues and challenges they face.

The project provides a safe and supportive space for the ladies to connect with each other and with community resources, and it advocates for policies and programs that support the rights and well-being of sex workers.

At the end of 2023, a celebration was held to give thanks for the ladies that were trained throughout the year. This involved food, games and dancing! And, most importantly, the ladies were told that they had now qualified as Shining Star peer educators and were presented with certificates.

It left the Shining Stars of 2023 feeling valued, loved and appreciated!



Rudo receiving an award



The end of year celebration

2023 Shining Star, Rudo.

“

I was a sex worker - I needed fast money to provide for my children.

And, because my right hand does not function, I did not have any hope or plans for the future. At Shining Star, I learnt how to prevent HIV: about sticking to one partner; using condoms; and, when raped, how to get assistance with PEP.

They are helping me leave sex work, and I get comfort from their non-judgemental attitude. Financially, I was given business knowledge I did not have and start up capital. I learnt that my disability is not inability. I now sell perfumes, hair sprays and roll-ons, something I never thought I would be able to do with one hand. They helped me gain skills to provide for my family.

Without Shining Star, I would probably be dead, in jail or HIV positive because the situation I was in was suicidal and dangerous for myself and my children.

”

# Write a will for free!

We've partnered with expert will writers, Octopus Legacy to provide you with a quick and easy will writing service. And what's more - in 2024, you can get it for FREE by using the code ACETUKFREE.

Octopus Legacy offers a multitude of ways to write your will: face-to-face with a solicitor, by telephone or, if you live in England or Wales, you can do it all online on the Octopus Legacy website at [www.bit.ly/acetUKOctopus](http://www.bit.ly/acetUKOctopus).

There's no catch, you don't have to bequest acet UK a penny - but, of course, if you'd

like to remember our work in your will, we'd obviously be delighted!

To find out more and to book an appointment, simply call the Octopus Legacy team on 0800 773 4014 and quote ACETUKFREE.



## ACET Russia

### Education and training

Thanks to your support, ACET Russia's compassionate facilitators have worked in over 10 cities and towns in the last year delivering education to prevent HIV, STIs, unhealthy relationships and destructive behaviour such as smoking, drug-taking, and alcohol abuse.

Their informative lectures and seminars are delivered in various settings including schools, colleges, employment centres, orphanages, churches, and pre-trial detention centres.

They have been able to reach 13,729 young people, far exceeding their target of 10,000!. They have also equipped 163 teachers and 381 parents.

14 brave young people were able to receive counselling to work through difficult personal issues.

The teams have also delivered HIV prevention outreach to prisoners, people on probation and unemployed people through their partnerships with the prison, probation and employment services.



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