

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

June 2026



Our vital education work across the UK is needed more than ever. Teenage pregnancy rates are rising for the first time in 14 years (Government Association, 2025), and 40% of children have experienced physical or emotional abuse (Youth Endowment Fund, 2025). Many young people are also struggling with low self-esteem and loneliness. UK 15-year-olds report the lowest life satisfaction in Europe (PISA, 2022), and are far more likely to own a mobile phone (96%) than to live with both parents (55%). **The evidence is clear: healthy relationships are key.**

Through our Esteem programme, we are committed to reaching all 9 million children in the UK with high-quality relationships education. To achieve this, we need more Esteem-accredited educators delivering relationships and sex education with confidence and expertise in schools. Do you know anyone who regularly works with young people, who we could train?

This is a challenging time for charities. Funding is increasingly competitive, and rising costs continue to put pressure on resources. In response, and with our commitment to children and young people at the forefront, we have made the strategic decision to close our Chester office. This allows us to focus resources on the schools we serve in London while continuing to meet training needs nationwide.

Closing our Chester office in March meant saying goodbye to valued staff who collectively gave almost 40 years of service. Their contribution has been instrumental in growing our work, and we are deeply grateful for their dedication.

Looking ahead, we will be engaging with members to strengthen our Esteem network. We are pleased to be training 25 RSE Heads in Wales this July, with further training already booked for October. We will also be exploring new ways of working with young people and increasing sustainable unrestricted funding, and we would love your support.

Please join us as we reach out to the 9 million children and young people in the UK who need education about healthy relationships. Your support will help us reach children at a critical stage in their lives with education that can shape their futures and strengthen communities. Please consider donating, increasing your gift, or organising a fundraising event, to help us reach the children and young people who need this education. Your support enables work that can transform lives and communities.

You can find fundraising ideas later in this newsletter, and **donate at www.acet-uk.com.**

We hope the stories and testimonials in this newsletter encourage you and demonstrate the impact of your support. Thank you—it is much needed and very much appreciated.

from the acet trustees

"I didn't know it wasn't my fault, until now."
Year 11 student

"I won't let him treat me in an
unhealthy way anymore" Year 10 student

"I now know how to exit unsafe situations."
Year 9 student

How do you build young people's resilience to the hypersexualised media and porn in today's society?

How do you help them to feel valued and respected enough to be able to voice their own opinions without fear?

These are all things our esteem team of educators do on a daily basis. Improving young people's self esteem helps children to feel recognised and respected, and builds their confidence to be a positive part of their school and home community. Self confidence is key to being able to hold your own, if your peer group, friends or even family members are trying to persuade you to do something that you're not sure you want to do. And being confident enough not only to say a firm "No", but also to say things like "Not at the moment", "I'm not sure; could we talk about it some more first?", or "Actually, I don't feel comfortable doing that", is a real skill that needs to be developed.

Empowering young people to build healthy relationships is what we do best- and not just with their peers, but with family members, teachers and other adults too. Our Esteem team position themselves to facilitate learning, by **exploring** ideas **together with** the learners, **listening** to the young people and **giving them space** to develop their thinking. Many teens feel marginalised already, so it's very important to get alongside them and affirm that their voices matter.

Growing up today is increasingly different to last year, never mind when you were growing up! I think everyone agrees that children need to be protected, but how do we go about that without them feeling excluded?



We've been co-producing lessons in schools **with** young people, teachers and parents. In fact, we pilot **all** our lessons in schools and use the feedback from the children themselves to adapt and refine both our lessons and resources, ensuring they are the best they can be, *before* we release them for others to use. And our lessons are not only used here in the UK, but in our partner countries as well! During a recent trip to South Africa we were delighted to witness children in rural secondary schools discussing different types of bullying and how to both stop it and report it.

The new social media ban due to come in in Spring next year aims to protect children from harmful content and addictive algorithms, but what else needs to happen?

Could YOU be talking about this with your children, whatever their age, or with your nieces, nephews and grandchildren? You see, it's not just about absorbing knowledge, it's about developing (and modelling) critical thinking. Challenging stereotypes and addressing offensive behaviour, in the moment, whilst encouraging young people to consider and question different influences, gives them ownership over their learning.

Providing opportunities to shape discussions and exploring topics and issues together builds confidence (in you and them!) and, importantly, strengthens trust. Once young people know that you are not going to judge them, then their ideas and curiosity will come through. Managing difficult feelings, seeking help, setting boundaries and even just recognising uncomfortable situations for what they are, all play into core skills for supporting children's mental and relational health, by building their esteem.



13-year-old Fon where she lives with her great-grandmother.

Bridging the generational divide in Thailand

"I wanted to have a mother, but I grew up in neglect, as she went to live with a new husband. I now live with my great grandmother and my aunt. My great grandmother's health is not good: she cannot walk easily. She cannot care much for me. In my family, I felt invisible and overlooked."

23% of Thai children do not live with their biological parents, and most of these children (79%) live with grandparents. The impact of the generational divide that this creates is something ACET Thailand is witnessing in its work with children. Here is Fon's story.

"Other children would bully me about my skin colour and body shape. They often called me a black crow with big breasts. I did not have a bra and would walk with hunched shoulders so that no one could see. I did not like myself and would fight back by hitting, punching, and cursing. I was very angry."

I met ACET Thailand at the Smart Life project when they came to teach us at school. The activities made me understand myself and my body.

My mother had me when she was 15 years old. Her life was very difficult, with no money, and she had to break up with my father. I don't want to get pregnant while I am still studying. Smart Life was the first time I had ever seen a condom.

"The water exchange activity showed us how HIV and STIs can be transmitted. We can get infected without knowing who brought it. I have a relative who died of AIDS, so I was scared. But I learnt what I need to protect myself and what I should be careful about."

I learned that my body is important and that no one should take advantage of me with words or actions. If someone hurts me, I can get help. The team taught me to know myself, that everyone is different, and I dared to accept my own unique differences. I realised that God made me very special. Now, when people tease me, I don't get angry anymore."

This project has been a great experience for me. With my grandmother's permission, the team invited me to church, and I had the chance to learn guitar and practice reading. I have more confidence and dare to speak up and present my ideas."

The team suggested that I talk to my family about what I wanted them to do. I wanted my great grandmother to hug me, to talk to me nicely. The team often visits my house. Other agencies come once and never again. But this organisation cares, cares about my silence, cares about why I do not have a bra like other people. Now I have a bra to wear every day, and I walk up straight."



Arebi's story

"I first came into contact with ACET Nigeria, when they spoke at my church and offered free testing and counselling services for various health conditions in the community. At the time, I had been experiencing persistent and severe headaches. I was in so much pain that I could not even differentiate colours. I felt overwhelmed, afraid, and unsure of what the future held for me.

I decided to attend the testing with ACET Nigeria: an encounter that became a turning point in my life when the ACET counselling officer informed me that my test result showed that I was HIV positive. Hearing this news was devastating. I felt deeply confused and emotionally overwhelmed."

Nigeria has one of the greatest burdens of HIV in the world, and women and children are particularly vulnerable due to Nigeria's high teenage pregnancy rate, lack of knowledge, limited access to sexual reproductive health services, and intergenerational sex.

"The support I have received from ACET has been both emotional and practical. The counselling I received helped reassure me that I am not alone, no matter what challenges I face. The spiritual support gave me strength and hope during very difficult times."

"Practically, they supported me in accessing antiretroviral treatment and regularly call to check if I have taken my medications and to ask if I am facing any challenges, offering guidance and help when needed. They have also accompanied me to the hospital, covering my transport costs.

After I received support and treatment through ACET, I brought my youngest child to their office for testing. She also tested positive for HIV, and with proper treatment and care, is now healthy and no longer frequently ill. I am deeply grateful to God for the entire ACET organization.

They have saved my life and that of my child.

The greatest change I have experienced is a sense of peace and wellbeing. I no longer worry constantly about my health, and I feel mentally and emotionally stronger. I am healthier than before, rarely falling sick as I used to, and I now

see myself as capable of managing my health and life with confidence.

I have shared the knowledge I gained from ACET with my other 6 children. I have spoken to them about the dangers of engaging in unprotected sex and the risks of sharing sharp objects. By passing on this information, I hope to help them stay healthy and make safe choices in their lives.

I am my family's primary caregiver and provider due to my husband's age and blindness. We rely on my farming for our livelihood, and we face ongoing struggles with school fees, food, and healthcare costs. But, despite life's challenges, I am now hopeful and determined. I hope to educate my children, build a modest home, and provide a better future for my family. With faith and support from ACET, I believe improved farming outcomes will help me overcome these challenges and achieve my dreams."

Parenting for today in Nigeria

"I believed I already knew all the tactics for raising children but, when I faced real challenges with them, I struggled. I did not fully recognize that I could seek guidance or adapt my approach to meet the needs of today. Parenting methods from the 1990s are very different from the expectations and challenges faced by children in the 2020s.

At ACET Nigeria's Better Parenting training, I discovered that effective parenting requires patience, consistency, and emotional balance. It gave me a new perspective and practical tools, boosting my confidence and equipping me with new insights and strategies.

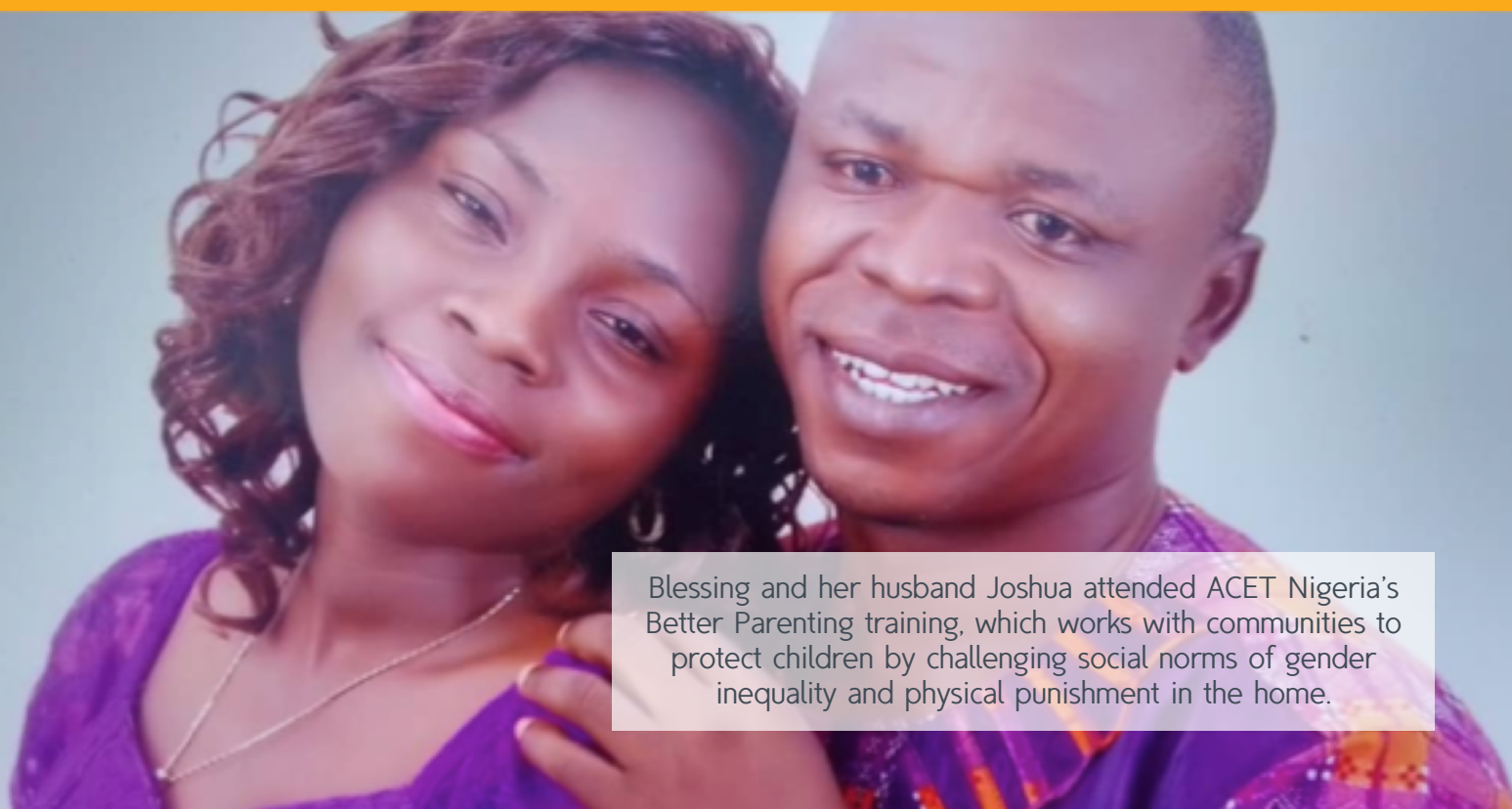
Before the training, I only occasionally praised my children. Now I know the importance of praising children, understanding that consistent positive reinforcement helps boost their confidence, self esteem, and motivation.

I now involve my children in decisions, giving them the opportunity to express their views on issues that concern them. Allowing them to share their opinions helps them feel valued, teaches responsibility, and strengthens family relationships.

I used to discipline my children through flogging. During the training, I learned that situations are better addressed through conversation, explanation, and guidance. I have adopted a more balanced approach to discipline, focusing on understanding, communication, and teaching rather than punishment alone. This has strengthened my relationship with my children and helped them learn from their mistakes in a positive way.

I learned that I should encourage them and give them the chance to explore and develop their interests. Supporting them in areas they are passionate about helps them grow, build confidence, and achieve their personal goals. I also learned that boys and girls have equal rights and privileges in the family. Both should be given the same opportunities, care, and support to grow, learn, and participate. Treating them equally helps build fairness, respect, and confidence.

My advice to other parents is to be open to learning, seek guidance when needed, and understand that parenting is constantly evolving; what worked in the past may not work today, and adapting is key to raising wellrounded children."



Blessing and her husband Joshua attended ACET Nigeria's Better Parenting training, which works with communities to protect children by challenging social norms of gender inequality and physical punishment in the home.



13-year-old Eva in the blue sweater helping ACET prepare materials.

Standing up for the abused in Ukraine

"What I went through to protect my child is terrible. Due to corruption, dishonesty and the unwillingness of many state bodies, it is very difficult to protect a child in Ukraine. If it hadn't been for ACET, then I, like most parents in such situations, would have simply given up."

When Viktoria's 13-year-old daughter Eva came home with large bruises on her legs, she initially told her parents that she had fallen from a skateboard. Over time, Viktoria noticed Eva becoming more introverted, reluctant to leave the house. From ACET Ukraine's parent workshops, Viktoria recognised the signs that her daughter was being abused and told Eva that no matter what was happening, she would always love and accept her. Only then did Eva admit she was being bullied by classmates and had been beaten. They had also produced intimate AI images of Eva and posted these on Telegram. Eva had contemplated suicide.

"The practical knowledge that I received at ACET helped me to recognise the signs of abuse, and I knew how to talk to Eva so she would open up to me. I immediately called the ACET team, and together we thought out a plan to help Eva."

They helped me write statements for the police and Eva's school but they did not respond in the way we expected. The school principal blamed Eva and said Eva should transfer school. The police lost my statement and the photos, and

constantly postponed meetings with the investigator. I found out that the parents of the children who bullied Eva were very wealthy, that they had bribed the school principal. When I did not withdraw my police statement, they threatened me and made a false report to child custody about my parenting. All this time, Eva did not go to school. She was afraid to walk on the street."

The ACET team then helped me find a lawyer to apply to the Ombudsman for the Protection of Children to intervene. This whole thing lasted 8 months and cost UAH 100,000. We won the court case, and the parents of the abusers had to pay the court costs and moral damage. Eva moved to another school and found friends and the support of teachers there, and the ACET psychologist helped her get out of a difficult psycho emotional state."

EVA: *"I was so ashamed. I was accused of something I didn't do. Photos were faked and posted on Telegram. I was bullied. It was all killing me. If it wasn't for Mom and ACET, I would have committed suicide. I am also glad that the ACET psychologists helped me. I wouldn't be able to go through all this myself."*



1.

Raise FREE donations by recycling

Our partners at Recycling for Good Causes will reuse and recycle your unwanted or broken jewellery, watches, banknotes, coins, stamps and gadgets, saving precious raw materials and giving the proceeds to acet UK! There are 3 recycling schemes:

1

For jewellery and banknotes only, pop into an envelope or jiffy bag no bigger than A5 and visit www.acet-uk.com/recycling to download our Freepost label. The jewellery can be precious, costume, children's or watches in any material including broken and damaged items (like odd earrings, snapped chains or items with missing stones). Banknotes from ANY country of any age are welcome, so all of those obsolete pre-Euro notes are a perfect start! But please don't send coins by this method.

2

All kinds of stamps are welcome, whether they are loose or stuck to paper. Simply cut or carefully rip the postage stamp from the used envelope, being careful that you don't damage the stamp. Once you have a collection, pop them in an envelope, making sure you have the correct postage, to acet UK, PO Box 16992, Sutton Coldfield, B73 9YA (postage needs to be applied for this scheme).

3

For larger amounts of the above items and unwanted and/or broken mobile phones, cameras, and gadgets, then contact Recycling for Good Causes by phone on 0800 633 5323 or by email at customerservices@recyclingforgoodcauses.org and ask for a free recycling sack for your items. When your sack weighs between 10 and 30kg, just give them a call or an email and they will arrange collection free of charge at a convenient time.

"I requested a recycling sack from Recycling for Good Causes and asked my friends and family to dig out old, unwanted items. We quickly reached the minimum weight with broken bits of jewellery and coins, as well as old mobile phones, tablets and even an old SatNav. acet UK received a donation cheque a few weeks later."

Raise FREE donations while you shop online

As an acet UK supporter, did you know that you can also raise funds for our work simply by shopping online at your favourite retailers — at no cost to you?!

Simply sign up for a free account at Give As You Live and you can generate FREE donations when you:

- switch your insurance, utilities, broadband or phone provider (and you can even compare deals, saving yourself money!).
- book train and ferry tickets, flights, hotels and package holidays;
- shop for your home and garden, including for larger items like electricals;
- buy gifts;
- make purchases for your employer;
- and buy or top up store cards.

Simply select acet UK as your charity when you sign up for a FREE account at www.giveasyoulive.com.

Then download the Donation Reminder Tool for your web browser and every time you visit a retailer who is part of the scheme, you will receive a prompt that your purchase could generate a donation – it's so easy!

Or if you prefer shopping from your phone or your iPad, there is even a handy Give As You Live APP!

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The donation reminder tool is brilliant. It means I never miss an opportunity to raise a free donation.

And with the APP, I can now use Give As You Live on my phone too.

Lots of small donations from little purchases soon add up and, for larger purchases, the donations are quite impressive.

I raised £15 when I booked a ferry with Stenaline, £10 when I bought a new phone from Tesco Mobile, and when my gas and electric contract came to an end, I used the Give As You Switch comparison tool to find a good deal for myself and raised £17 for acet UK.

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Give as you Live Online



Physical Personal space, who can touch you, where, when and how they may touch you.	Material The limits you set on how much money or resources you give or loan other people.
Emotional How you allow people to talk to you, taking responsibility for someone else's mistakes or actions.	Time What you're willing to spend your time on. Spending time on yourself.
Sexual Your comfort with sexual experiences as well as the sharing of details.	Relationships Behaviour that you are or are not willing to put up with.

13-year-old Khanyisile is in her second year as a Crossroads peer educator.



Empowering children in South Africa

"Sometimes I leave home before sunrise just to get to school on time. My legs get tired and I wish I did not have to come to school. Most of the young people here hang out in places that they should not be. Some get into trouble. Some get pregnant early."

Khanyisile battles the usual problems a rural South African community faces. One of her toughest adversities is the long walk to school. The journey takes nearly an hour each way, walking through dust when it's windy, getting scorched on a sunny day, and through muddy puddles during the rainy season.

"I joined Crossroads' Peer Education programme last year. I come here because it is safe, and I am given the space to be myself, to ask questions and not be judged when I get something wrong. I have learnt more about myself, my worth and have been taught skills that I will need now and when I'm older."

My mother wants me to get a job in America but, because of Peer Education, my goal is to become a doctor in South Africa. I want to be a strong and helpful person in my community who speaks out against things that are wrong.

I've learnt at Peer Education that my situation does not determine my future. I see the walk to school as a sign that I am serious about my education and future. Everything that is a problem now is my motivation to succeed in life. I will be resilient.

I speak openly with my friends and tell them choices matter and that saying "No" is powerful. But we must be serious when we say it, to protect ourselves. I tell them I do not support being married at a young age or having a child while we are still in school. We do not have many good role models here, but I am not thinking about marriage or babies. I want to finish school first."

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