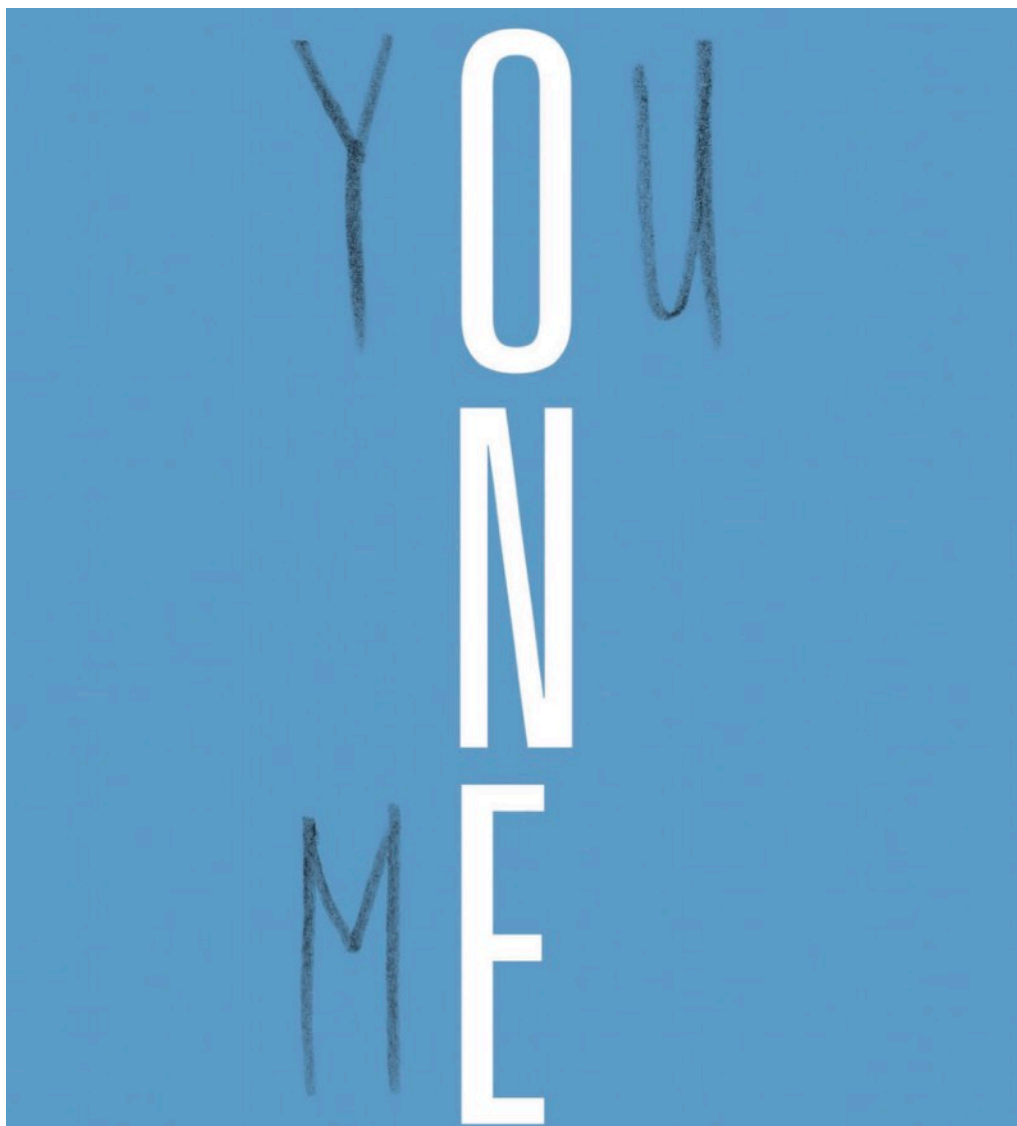


**Using a Comprehensive Sexuality Education  
for Community Development**

# **Educhiamoci alla Sessualità**





Vicenza, Contrà Proti 3  
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## Introduction

*Using a Comprehensive Sexuality Education for Community Development- Educhiamoci alla Sessualità* is a project designed in the Eighties by biologist Anna Verde to fill a persisting educational gap in school. This gap is not connected with disciplinary approaches but depends on the awareness of the interrelationship between mind, body and social relations. In particular, epistemological dimensions does not represent an educational priority.

The right to sexual education was emphasized in 2009 by UNESCO with the guide "*International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education*".

In 2018, Audrey Azoulay, Director-General, UNESCO, presents the new guide on sexual education emphasizing that if the international community will not acknowledge the educational needs of adolescents about sexuality, the goals of sustainable development indicated in the UN 2030 Agenda will hardly be achieved.

The new UNESCO *International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education* walks through the classical educational categories, such as social relationships, gender approach, the body and human development, sexuality and sexual behavior, sexual and reproductive health. The Guide provides a clear understanding of *Comprehensive Sexuality Education* and therefore constitutes a comprehensive approach to the multiple educational dimensions of sexuality.

The project *Using a Comprehensive Sexuality Education for Community Development- Educhiamoci alla Sessualità*, in turn, is placed along this international line of learning theory which fills the document of UNESCO, adding a training method centered on the Cooperative Learning, where younger generations interact with the peers adult group, prepared to face questions and doubts of adolescents, while experienced adults offer their expertise to promote a dialogue aimed at the sustainable development of Vicenza's community.

Enrico Tezza  
President Club for UNESCO Vicenza

Anna Verde  
Council member Club for UNESCO Vicenza

## Goals

Adolescents have the right to receive adequate information on topics related to sexuality. This does not take place through one single lesson or a single speech (even if given by an expert), but education (ex-ducēre) must be carried out during a long timeline to give students opportunity to reflect upon their own ideas and those that have surfaced from the mates of the group involved.

In fact, according to the spirit of this project, sexuality is intended as “communication” which, in the optimal setting of the group, promotes emotional and social relationships, constitutive elements of a balanced and sustainable society. Within this general framework, the goals can be summarized as follows:

- To make adolescents aware of their status with particular attention to the sexual and relational aspects, reducing anxieties and prejudices that can often characterize them.
- To build a network of professionals who help adolescents in the maturation and sexual development cycle, offering them the opportunity to raise issues, share experiences, mindset and emotions within the professionals on adolescent learning relationship.

# YOUR RIGHTS

**#standup4humanrights**

## Intended audience

Adolescents aged 15 to 17, residing in Vicenza

## Background

*Using a Comprehensive Sexuality Education for Community Development- Educhiamoci alla Sessualità* stems from the activity carried out within the schools during the Eighties. Following the School-Health Memorandum of Understanding signed in 1989 and the appointment of Anna Verde as Referent Professor for Health Education, in Thiene (VI) it was established a close relationship of collaboration between a settled group of high school teachers and experts of Consultorio Familiare (Family Counseling Office) of former Ulss n.4 “Alto Vicentino”, realizing an interdisciplinary school course for students of the second year, with the goal of promoting education to sexuality and affectivity with the support of experts of the “teen agers space” of the Consultorio Familiare.

Subsequently, in order to obtain for her students a model of responsible sexuality, in the first decade of the millennium she has perfected the structure of the course, so that in the class she realized discussion forums on current topics of students’ interest, related to sexuality. As a result, an interactive website was born, in which the themes were developed by the same students as peer educators<sup>1</sup>.

After ten years, from the former students’ follow-up has emerged the satisfaction of having lived their sexuality serenely and having acquired skills on the topics treated in the past within the class group.

This matured on the Referent Professor the idea of re-proposing the methodology developed with a direct contact with adolescents, experts and peer tutors. This is why the project *Using a Comprehensive Sexuality Education for Community Development- Educhiamoci alla Sessualità* has been designed, in which the exchange of “intergenerational knowledge” has become promotion tool for a healthy education in sexuality.

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<sup>1</sup>See [www.breaktime.it](http://www.breaktime.it)

## Methodology and links with the UNESCO guide

Based on the principles set out in the *International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education*, the proposed methodology of learning is based on Cooperative Learning in its broadest sense, in which the active involvement of the participants in the dimension of experiential know-how, within the small group is contemplated. Through mutual interdependence (of goals, resources, materials, roles and people), participants are solicited to create the learning atmosphere through the work in pairs.

As research shows, with the promotion of cooperation between experts and trainers, group relationships are established within the group and between other groups, the sense of self-esteem, awareness and responsibility is strengthened leading to the formation of social skills and communication tout court.

The social and emotional interaction, arisen within the heterogeneous groups of learning, is a fundamental educational element, a harbinger of acceptance of differences and of the enhancement of the wealth of diversity.

In the small group, and even more in the pair group, adolescents find the appropriate climate to open up and face with courage problems connected to sexuality with their peers who have the same problems, mutually exchanging experiences, fears, hopes, questions.



## Educational program

The program follows the fundamental areas of the Comprehensive Sexuality Education and is summarized in the following table that recaps the main contents of the course.

<b>Course Program</b>				
<b>Module</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Aim</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Duration in hours</b>
1	Social relationships in Vicenza's community	Orientating to the awareness of social relationships	The words of adolescence. Relationships and social interaction	2
2	Lifestyles	Explaining the obstacles and beauty of intimate social relationships	Adolescence in the city of Vicenza. Structures for help seeking	2
3	Principles of sexology	Introducing to essential knowledge about sexual relationships	Anatomy, development and maturation of the body	2
4	Psychology of affections	Describing the relational dynamics	Elements of psychology applied to adolescence	2
5	Prevention	Illustrating health and social risks and consequences	AIDS prevention Social discrimination	2
6	Rights and social participation	Presenting the relevant legislation and protection against sexual violence	Right to charge. Prevention of sexual violence	2
7	Abilities related to education to sexuality	Summarizing the skills learned within a single logical framework	Learned skills. Ability to use them to help peers	2



## Teaching staff

- The gynecology Medical Director of Santorso Hospital and doctor of the Youth Area of Consultori Familiari of Thiene and Schio, ULSS n. 7 Pedemontana.
- One lawyer of the Court of Vicenza
- Two psychologists of the Teenager Area of Consultorio Familiare of Thiene, ULSS n. 7 Pedemontana.
- One assistant of the Department of Prevention of Thiene, ULSS n.7 Pedemontana.
- Seven ex-students adult facilitators

**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

## Evaluation

The evaluation has been carried out in three phases. After the evaluation of the first module, in order to calibrate the languages and contents of the didactic modules, an intermediate and a summative assessments have been organized. The evaluation tools used are the following:

Compilation of questionnaires about pleasures, problems, current and future answers, sexed identity, doubts, and subsequent statistical elaborations of the surfaced data.

Impromptu comments in plenary/ letter to the director/ dear friend, I write you...

Asking questions to the experts.

Sex Box (all the questions that someone would like to ask but is too shy to do it on person).

The results of the final questionnaire, summarized hereunder, have highlighted what follows: a spontaneous awareness of referring to the experts for possible problems (in first place for 63% of adolescents), against the common solution of internet surfing (in the fifth place for 36%). Also important is the deliberate choice of using parents while keeping the mother at first and second place (45%) and the father at an interesting third place (45%).

Finally, the surfaced gratifying aspect is the considerable gap between the situation at the beginning and at the end matured among the participants, based on their involvement. To the question "If you hear speaking about sexuality topics, will you intervene", at the beginning of the course the percentage of "yes" was extremely small, while at the end of the course 81% of the participants are able to intervene and 45% are also able to support their own opinions and ideas.

According to results, 100% of participants declare that the experience has been useful and interesting, they felt involved and said that the discussions within the group had been helpful to clarify their ideas.

## Credits

Consultorio Familiare Ulss Thiene (VI), Educazione alla sessualità e Scuole superiori in Rete

Dipartimento Prevenzione Ulss Thiene (VI), Prevenzione AIDS

Provveditorato agli studi di Vicenza, Corso Sarò uomo - Sarò donna.

European Commission, Riconoscimento Netdays 2002

Indire - Best practice, 2003

Miur, USRT, Ufficio XIII –Vicenza

Expo 2015, Corner del Biologo

Istituto Italiano Sessoanalisi

## Publications

Verde A., Calgaro L. (2006) Educare alla sessualità in classe. Percorsi didattici per l'insegnamento curricolare. Con cd-rom. Tirrenia (Pi) Edizioni del Cerro

Verde A., Savegnago A. (2004) Formare il peer educator: metodologia d'intervento. Educazione Sanitaria e promozione della salute, n. 27 (4).

Verde A. (2012) Educazione alla sessualità. Una nuova metodologia. in Scuola Democratica, n. 5, pp. 218-224.

Chiari G. (2011), Educazione interculturale e apprendimento cooperativo: teoria e pratica della educazione tra pari, Trento, Quaderni del dipartimento di sociologia e ricerca sociale, n.97.

Verde A. (2014) Educazione alla sessualità. I giovani raccontano. in: Biologi Italiani anno XLIV n. 10, pp. 51-58.