

# Loveact

Living positive and intersectional sexuality education for gender-based violence prevention

Starting the conversation on Sex-Ed

# Roadmap

for the collection of Memories and Voices



Co-funded by  
the European Union



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**LoveAct** – *Living positive and intersectional sexuality education for gender-based violence prevention* (n. 101094068 – LOVEACT) is co-funded by the European Union and running from 01/03/2023 to 28/02/2025 in Italy, France, Greece, Lithuania, Belgium, Cyprus, Spain and Basques Countries.

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CSI, Cyprus [csicy.com](http://csicy.com)

Symplexis, Greece [symplexis.eu](http://symplexis.eu)

DDG, Lithuania [www.diversitygroup.lt](http://www.diversitygroup.lt)

The Square Dot Team, Belgium [thesquare.team](http://thesquare.team)

InteRed, Spain [intered.org](http://intered.org)

UPV/EHU, Basque Countries [www.ehu.eus](http://www.ehu.eus)



# Foreword

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The “Roadmap” document you are currently holding in your hands is part of the project **LoveAct**, which aims to reduce the risk of gender-based violence and teen-dating violence by **equipping teenagers, parents and educational staff with knowledge and competences in Comprehensive Sexual Education (CSE)**<sup>1</sup>.

## About the LoveAct project

We aim at:

- > Co-creating tools on CSE that are high-quality, evidence-based, intersectional, and appealing to multiple targets, including teenagers, families and educational staff.
- > Training teachers, educators, parents and adults in general on how to address issues related to GBV, stereotypes and norms among teenagers;
- > Empowering teenagers to build safe and healthy relationships and improve their well-being through CSE.
- > Raising awareness on the need of CSE, as a tool to prevent GBV.

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<sup>1</sup> Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) - or the many other ways this may be referred to - is a process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality. It aims to equip people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that empowers 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. CSE presents sexuality with a positive approach, emphasizing values such as respect, inclusion, non-discrimination, equality, empathy, responsibility and reciprocity. It reinforces healthy and positive values about bodies, puberty, relationships, sex and family life (UNESCO, 2018).

Among the activities foreseen for this project, we offer:

- > Educational, informative and networking tools and material on Sex-Ed, available on [The Gender Talk](#) online platform (such as a [Map of Best Practices](#), a [Database of Resources](#), and soon a **Digital Guide**).
- > **Sex-Ed Councils** established in 7 European cities.
- > **Co-creative and training activities** involving teenagers and families aimed at exploring their personal stories and memories with regards to affectivity and sexuality, as well as acquiring concrete knowledge on sexuality and affectivity.
- > International and local **Training Workshop** for professionals, aimed at acquiring methodologies, approaches, activities and tools on CSE.
- > **Events and social media campaigns** for raising awareness on sex-ed.

With this Roadmap, the LoveAct partnership wants to guide the readers (being youth organisations, activists, school staff or whoever!) towards the opening of an **intergenerational dialogue** on Sex Education among young people and adults, as well as the **assessment** of adolescents' needs in terms of sexuality and affectivity.

In order to do so, we will explore in detail our experience of the “**LoveAct Memories & Voices**” collection, on which we worked during the summer 2023 with dozens of adolescents and different family members in Italy, France, Greece, Lithuania, Belgium, Cyprus and Spain. We will focus on the *methodology* we used for organising workshops and collecting personal stories, and show some of the *excerpts* we received. Then, we will guide you *step-by-step* to replicate our model and organise your own “Memories & Voices” collection with a group of teenagers, parents, family members, school members or anyone who can be interested in expanding personal limits and sharing personal stories!

**Let's start!**

# Table of Contents

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<i>Foreword</i> .....	3
<i>LoveAct Memories and Voices</i> .....	7
1.1 The approach .....	7
1.2 The experience .....	9
<i>How-to guide</i> .....	11
STEP 1 – Prepare the list of topics/questions to be answered .....	11
STEP 2 – Recruit your participants .....	12
STEP 3 – Organize your workshops.....	14
STEP 4 – Collect materials for the “Voices” .....	19
STEP 5 – Organize a feedback session.....	21
<i>Conclusions</i> .....	26
<i>Annex 1</i> .....	27
<i>Partners</i> .....	37



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# LoveAct Memories and Voices

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*“Sex is still considered taboo today; In my personal experience, not only mine but also that of most young people, there are few open and free conversations about topics such as sex, gender and sexual orientation, especially with our parents and siblings, but also sometimes with friends.”*

*A teen, Italy*

## 1.1 The approach

**Intergenerational dialogue** is key in promoting understanding and learning across cultures and generations, especially when dealing with CSE. It seems like older generations often criticise or complain about younger ones. But when we take the time to ask questions and dig deeper into people’s youth, it often turns out that despite socio-cultural differences, a lot of similarities exist in the way we love, we suffer, we desire, we create expectations.

The experience has shown how an intergenerational open dialogue over sensitive topics such as sexuality and affectivity within a family can be **beneficial** to all. Namely, by collecting and sharing all these stories, memories, values:

**The new generation** can find a safe link for themselves to take next steps into their future, and ideally start to count with an adult who can respect their decisions.

**The older generation** can understand how their children or young relatives feel, identify and interact in their love life or among friends, breaking the taboo of sexuality and affectivity in between generations.

*“When I was 13, my father explained to me the importance of respecting the “no” of the girls I was going out with, of always asking beforehand what I wanted to try, of not taking anything for granted, of being very cautious and caring...”*

*A father, France.*

With this in mind, the LoveAct partnership set out to collect Memories and Voices, in other words, **youth and adults' stories** about sexuality and affectivity, focusing on the specificities we had in our different contexts and spaces, and on the *methodology* we were using for the organization of workshops aimed at meeting our “target groups” and open the discussion with them.

Specifically, the information contained in this Roadmap is a collection of:

**The LoveAct “Memories”** being **texts**, written by teenagers or adults (for instance, their parents/guardians or siblings), in which they share their experiences regarding different topics related to CSE: whether they have received or not a sex education; how they observe or live relations, identities, cultural clashes or disabilities in relation to sexuality and affectivity; what are their needs and desires in different stages of their life. **Memories** are intended to be reflective moments to be lived individually, but can be promoted through ad-hoc workshops in which the concept is explained and the texts collected, read and shared with the group!

**The LoveAct “Voices”** being **audio recordings**, always taken by teenagers or adults with the same aim of sharing points of views on sexuality and affectivity, but conducted through **semi-structured interviews**: ideally, **Voices** come from adolescents willing to interview a close person and therefore to open with them an intergenerational dialogue, that will enrich both adults and adolescents, shading light on differences and similarities of their views on sexuality, affectivity and intimacy, of all core aspects of CSE. This experience can come **after** the individual writing phase of the Memories' workshops, as a scaling-up process.

## 1.2 The experience

Within the LoveAct project, we designed the concepts of Memories & Voices as interesting **collaborative activities** allowing us and all participants to identify aspects and facts on sexuality and affectivity that are common to a number of people, and to better frame people's needs and desires in regards to CSE. These two aspects are crucial in order to develop quality CSE online guides which respond to adolescents and educators demands! Therefore, all inputs collected through Memories & Voices are analysed and selected to become part of the Guides. We believe that by exploring teenagers' answers, we can address their interests or questions, and give an informed and inclusive answer. While exploring parents' answers, we can identify gaps to be filled, as well as difficult subjects to be explored with their own children, and concepts that are new to them.

### *How did we collect such materials?*

In brief:

#### LoveAct “Memories”

Our aim was to involve teenagers aged 14-18 and parents of teenagers that age (not necessarily related between them!). Each partner organisation recruited the groups mainly through their schools' network, by publishing an open-call or, via personal networks, among.

Once recruited, we organized a set of workshops structured around non-formal activities, including ice-breakers and exercises to build the group and set the tone, as well as activities introducing the topic of sexuality and effectivity.

Then, based on a **list of questions for discussion** that we provided (encompassing all core aspects of CSE – Annex 1), participants were asked to share, in writing, their “answers” to (at least) one of the questions proposed. Each participant could choose the question or questions to which they wanted to answer.

## The LoveAct “Voices”

After the experience with Memories, **some members of the same group** of teenagers and family members involved in the previous activity were asked to conduct **semi-structured interviews** with their peers, parents, family members on intergenerational differences on sexuality, affectivity and intimacy encompassing all core aspects of CSE.

Therefore, they were “trained” on how to conduct interviews and voice recordings, and nicely encouraged to overcome potential limits, trying to pose the same issues discussed through the Memories coming back home, in class, with their peers or other adult figures, and collect those recordings. Voices were a kind of “homework” left after the Memories’ workshops.

In accordance with the partner’s Child Protection and Data Protection Policies, all participants signed an informed consent forms (from parents or legal guardians in the case of minors).

*“I am aware that family is the main and the most responsible figure for sexual education,.If in the first moments of puberty there is no dialogue, communication will be lost forever. Let us not forget that we play a role in modeling the personality and sexuality of our sons and daughters and therefore the affective relationships within the family, the way in which we resolve conflicts, what we prohibit, and what we allow as mothers and fathers are the tools that will help them acquire the necessary competencies for their well-being.”*

*A mother, Spain*

# How-to guide

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Replicating Memories & Voices is easy! Are you ready to start your intergenerational journey by organising a workshop to meet young people and/or adults and discuss sexuality and affectivity in an open way? Here is your step by step guide:

## STEP 1 – Prepare the list of topics/questions to be answered

Prepare a **list of topics or questions** to be answered by your audience, in the written or oral interview form. It is important that questions are inclusive, open-ended, and adapted to the public we are engaging. Also, once we have recruited our participants, you can revise your list and adapt it to your confirmed public.

In our LoveAct experience, we decided to separate the questions in these six topics, which are also reflected in the Love Act Digital Guide and Teachers Guide<sup>2</sup>:

1. An introductory module to break the ice and open “the” conversation in your group
2. Navigating relationships
3. Understanding gender
4. Protecting against gender-based violence
5. Comprehensive sexual health
6. Valuing cultural diversity and sexual education including people with disabilities.

For each module, we posed questions aimed at deepening the specific topic of reference. Some examples are “*Tell us about the time when you had your first sexual relation and how it made you feel*” for the module about relationships, or “*Tell us about a time when you discussed consent with your parents/children*” for the module on GBV.

For an extensive list of guiding questions take a look at **Annex 1**.

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<sup>2</sup> Soon available at this link: <https://thegendertalk.eu>

*“We do not get information about sex at school. We learn things about the human body, anatomy and pregnancies in biology classes but we do not learn things specifically about sex and health. We mention things in home economics but usually students laugh at stuff like images from the biology books and our teacher feels uncomfortable. I feel it is like a taboo.”*

*A teen, Cyprus.*

## STEP 2 – Recruit your participants

Time to **recruit and select** the participants of your “Memories and Voices” collection! In our case, as we were focusing on teenagers aged 14-18, and parents and legal guardians of teenagers that age, different strategies were used to recruit these target groups:

- > Recruiting through **personal and professional existing connections**
- > It was surely the most used in our partnership, as it may be easier to propose the activity to people we know being potentially interested.
- > Launching an **open call** - It can also be useful to announce the workshop, indicating its time, place, purposes etc., and spread the invitation through different channels (email, social media, posters around the city etc.).



### **TIPS Box - Pay attention to GDPR and informed consent:**

- > Make sure to explain your project and its objectives multiple times, when sending written information but also during the events, as people tend not to read all information.
- > Encourage potential participants to share their doubts; ask questions, showing them that you are trying to create a safe space to speak and share opinions on these topics.
- > Remember to check all privacy criteria, for instance GDPR rules in Europe.
- > Prepare a clear and complete informed consent form which includes information on how the material collected will be used.
- > Highlight that their contributions will remain anonymous.
- > Make sure participants give informed consent to participate by paying attention to any linguistic, cultural, physical or social barriers they may have. Make sure that they are really aware!

### **TIPS Box - From our experience:**

- > It could be useful to include **an online registration form** (you could already include the consent form there).
- > It could be useful to **cooperate with other local partners** including schools or other local organizations working with your target group such as book clubs, radio etc. For instance, CESIE involved “NewBookClub”, an association from Palermo which organizes workshops on collective writing open to the community. Another example is Elan Interculturel who worked with an association focusing on gender and sexual education in France.
- > If you are working with schools, **summer, winter breaks or exam periods** need to be considered.
- > We noticed that the composition of the group can change the attitude of the workshop: some adolescents may feel more comfortable expressing themselves in a group of known people, while for others it can be the opposite.

## **Attention:**

**Be aware of potential boycotters** that might want to boycott your event or harass its participants. During Covid-19 restrictions and especially during online meetings on topics such as feminism, inclusion etc., such people did so-called “zoombombing”. As precautionary measures, you may create a registration system, password or other means to safely enter the online or offline space. Another way to avoid this is to make open calls within reliable closed groups on social media or directly invite participants through well-known networks that share the same values.

*“I think it is important to respect the sexual choices of others and not judge or discriminate based on one’s sexuality. Solidarity and inclusion are fundamental to a sexually healthy and respectful community, as sexuality is an important part of everyone’s life and should be approached with respect and understanding. Talking about it openly can certainly help bring greater awareness and a sense of connection between people.”*

*A teen, Italy.*

## **STEP 3 – Organize your workshops**

The day has come! You are finally waiting for your participants to conduct the workshop and collect your Memories and Voices:

### **Welcome participants & create a safe space!**

Everyone has felt that little awkwardness or embarrassment between participants at the beginning of a workshop. How to overcome it?

### **Use energizers and ice-breaker activities**

This is precisely their role: to break the ice between people who do not know each other and are about to collaborate. Through short games, the participants are invited to take an interest in each other, to laugh and to move their bodies. These activities help to prepare for speaking and to put the shyest participants at ease. By creating a friendly and pleasant atmosphere, they can gain confidence and feel more at ease in the group. You can make them your own, suggest them at the beginning and end of the workshop, or when exchanges need to be stimulated! You will see that it is possible to learn and build team spirit with joy and lightness.



## Dedicate a moment to the creation of a safe space

It's important for participants to have a moment in which they can share **what would make that a safe place for them**. We may all have different needs and a safe place is one that takes into account all individual needs in a collective effort.

## Here you may want to highlight the issue of confidentiality

Some people could feel uncomfortable, because of the intimate nature of the questions, or because they know someone from the group... In these cases, remember participants that they are free to withdraw from the activity at any moment and may choose to what extent they want to participate. At the same time, when you are still in the process of organizing everything, you may suggest different adaptations to the standard format, as our partners Symplexis and DDG did: hosting small groups; make participants answer the most personal statements individually and on writing afterwards; conduct one-to-one meetings, especially in the case of countries with a higher taboo towards sex education.

### TIPS Box - Suggestion for Ice-Breaker activities

To start with, we suggest the icebreaker **"Name, pronoun"** or "name, pronoun, gesture". You can follow these steps:

- > All participants get in a circle with the facilitator, who starts saying its name, pronoun, and adds a gesture (it can be jumping, raising hand, turning around...). This gesture will be identified with the name.
- > Everybody repeats the facilitator name, pronoun and gesture.
- > The participant to the right does the same and everybody repeats, etc.
- > After the first round is done, we say all at the same time the name and gesture of everybody for a second round.
- > Then, we ask if somebody can say names and gestures of people they never met before until all names are learned by some people.

You can find a selection of energizers and ice-breakers at this [link](#).

## Tips Box - A suggestion for a Safe Space activity

To create a safe space, we recommend the “Safety Rules” activity:

- > Ask participants to answer, individually, and in writing, the question: “What do I need to feel safe in a group?”
- > Invite them to mention all kinds of needs, even the most “insignificant”. For example: “To feel safe, I need my phone close to me / I need that participation in activities is not mandatory / I need to know the rules, etc.”.
- > After 5 to 10 minutes, invite participants to take turns to share what they need to feel safe. As an alternative you can ask them to write it on an anonymous post-it and put them up on the board. In this case you will read them out loud.
- > After sharing, try to identify one or more safety instructions that will ensure that participants’ needs are met during the workshop.
- > Finally, display this charter throughout the workshop. Explain that this charter belongs to everyone, and that each person can return to it if they feel that the agreement made at the start of the workshop is not being respected.

## Launch your workshop!

Once your group is activated and feel enough at ease, you are ready to start to expose the contents of your workshop and the activities you will propose.

You can follow this checklist:

- > For the collection of the LoveAct Memories, show your participants a **selection of questions** and ask them to choose one or more
- > Leave them some time to answer the question(s) individually and give them some practical instructions: they can explore the space placing themselves wherever they wish, write on paper or smartphone, send to a specific email address or place the in a physical box etc.
- > Conclude the session asking if there is anyone who wants to share the Memory written.
- > Explain the next steps (as they are detailed below)

## TIPS Box - Be flexible!

In order to carry out these activities, some adaptations need to be made to fit the public, the targeted and the real one, once we have an idea of who is actually coming to the workshop. For instance, you may consider the following items:

- > **Language:** even if your participants have some knowledge of English, we recommend you to translate all materials to your local language, as people tend to go deeper in answering the questions and expressing themselves when they can answer in their first language. For our project, the questions were translated from English to **Spanish, Italian, French, Lithuanian, Greek and Flemish**, local languages of our associations. In addition, in some cases, given that participants in the workshops were foreign to the country in which the workshop took place, they required an **extra translation** to a language they understood better than the local one, as it was the case during CESIE's workshop with people with a migrant background. This allowed those participants to better express themselves. Also, during the translation, you can adapt the **phrasing of the questions** to the public, that from parents to teenagers might vary, as well as if our teenagers are aged 14 or 18. Language adaptations to **sociopolitical context** in our countries are also interesting: you may choose to talk about "sex education" or "emotional education", "education to respect" etc. , to avoid rejection from the educational system, the teachers or the parents. This can also be adapted during the development of workshops depending on the degree of involvement, knowledge or comfort of participants to the subject and the vocabulary.
- > **Accessibility:** one crucial aspect to be taken into consideration is the accessibility of the workshop for people with disability. You might reflect on the presence of architectural barriers for accessing the space you selected, or the ability of the facilitators to use sign language, tools for braille writing, thus being able to welcome the people assisting or accompanying them. This was the case of Symplexis, which, because of the difficulty in finding accessible venues, decided to host the events online.
- > **F2f vs Online:** in many other situation you may need to shift towards online meeting, for instance in the context of countries with pronounced differences between regions or territories, allowing to reach a wider and more diverse audience without needing a higher budget, as well as to solve the conciliation of work and personal life of parents of teenagers. This was the case for the InteRed team in Spain.

## Explain what's next!

Before you close your workshop, be sure that you have explained the next step you are proposing for completing the experience, being the collection of audio/video recordings of the so-called “Voices”. Give participants all necessary information on how to conduct the activity autonomously, answer their possible questions and provide them with all the necessary materials.

*“A nurse came to show us (contraceptive tools) in maybe 8th grade, but it’s not a very comfortable topic here in our school, everybody just laughed, although it’s a very natural thing to do, but if you talked about it in the gymnasium...everybody would laugh because it’s an awkward topic.”*

*A teen, Lithuania.*

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## STEP 4 – Collect materials for the “Voices”

As detailed by the beginning of the document, “Voices” are **semi-structured interviews** between young people and their peers parents, siblings, adults in general. The Love Act partners mostly conducted **intergenerational interviews**, with the aim of starting the conversation among different generations and breaking taboos over sexuality. This exercise allows adults to work on two fronts: in class, at school (or in any educational setting) and at home.

**Teach** young people about how to conduct interviews and recordings in radio and how to be a good reporter! Provide them a list of guiding questions; ask to choose 2-3 questions from the list to be Audio or Video recorded; and give clear instructions on how to proceed. It can be very useful having key questions guiding the narratives, as they help participants to understand what they wanted to tell and how to do it. However, it is good to include in the methodology also a previous work with them, to better bonds and to generate a safe space in which participants feel even more confident to share their personal experiences, thus working on a longer timeframe - *see Step 2 and 3!*

**Make them try** the activity with their peers in class, and collect those recordings. Then, as an **“homework”**, propose them to conduct the interviews with their parents, legal guardians, family members or adults in general.

 **Tips box - Technicalities for interviews’ recordings**

You can make a test for recording and listen to it to make sure the equipment is working properly.

- > Choose the right place for the recording:
- > It is important to be in a comfortable place and position for both you and your interviewer.
- > Avoid places that are too noisy (unless it is your choice and it is important for your narrative).
- > Avoid rooms that resonate (kitchens, spaces with lots of tiles, large empty rooms, etc.).
- > Avoid talking over the other person. Use non-verbal communication rather than verbal communication rather than mouthing or talking. For example, nod your head rather than saying for example, rather than saying “hm, yes, yes”.



#### **REMEMBER:**

- > All the interviewer and interviewed people **MUST** sign a consent form to participate in the interviews.
- > In case the interview is done among peers, it is the interviewee that records and sends the file to the facilitator partner, not the interviewer (for confidentiality reasons).

*“I don’t remember talking about sexuality and sex openly [...]. The feeling I have is that the topic didn’t come up [...]. I do remember that the first few times I “slept over” at my boyfriend’s house, I was in my early twenties, the first two or three times I lied to my parents, I told them I was going to a friend’s house.... but then I thought that I had never been a liar and what I did was to let it drop quite naturally. Then one of the days I wasn’t going home to sleep, what I did was to tell my mother “Mum, I’m going to sleep over at Juan’s house, who was my boyfriend by that time” and then she was very shocked, she didn’t expect it.”*

*A mother, Spain.*

## STEP 5 – Organize a feedback session

**How did this experience go?** It can be very important for you to learn from this experience and improve for the future, but also for participants to deepen their reflections and share their feelings, to organize an **extra “feedback session”** after the interviews. The contents of the sessions could be organised as follow:

- > Make a “brainstorming recap” of what happened, asking participants to rethink about the single activities done, both in the Memories’ workshop and after, when interviewing close people.
- > Try to sum up the results of the brainstorming in a list of moments, and ask them to think about how they were feeling in each of those moments. Make clear that they are not obliged to share such feelings with the group, while at the same time ask if someone wants to open up on the topic.
- > As a conclusion of the discussion, you may want to create a list of “Lessons Learnt”, which includes both positive and negative experiences that participants have passed through, but still to be considered as something learnt!

Below, an account of all positive and negative features emerged from our feedback sessions. We hope they can be of inspiration for you as well!



# Positive feelings

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The best feeling for most of the partnership members is the fact of **receiving good feedback and signs of appreciation** from our participants.

Among the very positive outcomes, one girl told CESIE team that since she participated in the exercise interviewing her mom, their relationship was more **open to conversations on CSE**, showing that the activities were not only aimed at collecting materials, but also at having an informative and impactful meaning for the participants and facilitators. It had grand success with InteRed in Spain too, where many parents told them that they felt a channel of communication had opened or were reinforced within their families regarding this topic **focusing on themselves** during the interviews, helped parents acquire a new perspective on how they dealt or should deal with certain situations regarding their children. Also, both parents and children said that participating in the activities had helped them to **understand the importance of CSE** in the educational system, within lessons and in the teachers' official training programs.

Also, it was positive to have the possibility of **choosing the meeting's type and features** that better adapt to each country's needs and those of participants. For instance, the DDG team since was able to adapt the activity to the confidentiality desired by participants.

Having a **youth-centered approach** was an unique experience for us, as it allowed an intergenerational mutual learning. For example, CESIE felt impressed by the **depth of young people's awareness** on the topic: this generation has a lot to teach to older ones on CSE topics, and especially on gender issues. Moreover, the activity allowed the collection of materials which are both **innovative and creative**, with a narrative rather than scientific language and approach, and that will be very useful for responding to actual youngsters' needs in the design of educational tools and awareness-raising campaigns. DDG also highlights the richness of this approach through which we really can hear the teenagers' thoughts on sexuality and affectivity, instead of "assuming" from an adult perspective. At the same time, talking to adults was useful to understand where the taboos come from. Regarding young engagement, Élan Interculturel was able to offer teenagers a radio workshop to create a podcast with their testimonies, so that they could get a product from the workshop. They'd never made a podcast before, and really enjoyed it!



Also linked to the previous point, another peak of the activities was the **open-ended question**, as they elicited some very **interesting responses**. The aim of the questions was to guide, but not influence, as achieved by CSI in Cyprus, who felt surprised of some teenagers not having any difficulty expressing themselves and being descriptive and explanatory when it came to certain scenarios as asked, and that participants in general were happy to share their thoughts so far, mostly in paper.

As the aim of this project is to provide **inclusive and comprehensive sexuality education** which unfortunately is not always the case in the general discourse and the collective imaginary of gender and sex studies and workshops, we were really proud to hear that people felt that **we took into account their experiences and points of view** regarding sexuality and relationships, that are most of the time make invisible or wrongly addressed. Symplexis in particular told us how their participants felt **empowered** from being taken into account in questions and experiences that were out of the norm, stating that *“for people who are part of minority groups which are often left out of these conversations, becoming visible and having the chance to share their life experiences is of great importance, especially for youth and children that may not have had any similar experiences yet”*

Lastly, other partners highlighted the **change from their usual public** as an interesting learning experience for them.



# Areas of improvement

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Among the negative aspects received as feedback, one of the biggest challenges the teams encountered is surely the **difficulty of recruiting** participants given the time of the year that the workshops had to take place, which was between May and July, but also to find adequate spaces for the workshops.

Another difficulty found, specifically in contexts where talking about sex is less common, was **getting people to trust us** and assuring them that their words would be anonymous. The case of Lithuania teaches us about the deep-rooted stigma surrounding CSE, as many young people still see this subject as a taboo, due to their home, environment, cultural, religious, or personal beliefs. To tackle this challenge, at the beginning DDG had small talks about overall topics, including topics related to their free time, their interests, etc. After that, the team started from more simple questions but with some young people, the connection was very good very quickly, so questions went more deeply. The DDG team thinks that it is very important to have a connection with young people to make a safe environment. Also, there was an assumption from teenagers that they had to express something very “intelligent” or very serious. That was the reason some of the teenagers did not engage in activities.

Society tends to underestimate the knowledge, maturity of young individuals, thinking that they are not ready or capable of engaging in conversations or talking about important topics for them. DDG challenged this prejudice by creating safe spaces for young people to express their thoughts, concerns, and questions openly. They talked to them about these prejudices and expressed support for young adults. DDG thinks that this helped to make connections more safely and to show young people that some people trust them and they are valued and important just the way they are.

Assuring **confidentiality** was also hard since participants had to ask their elders about intimate questions, so it is important to find participants willing to participate in the intergenerational interviews and ask those questions, to their family or other elders around. At the same time, given the sensitivity of the conversation, we encountered the **risk of triggering** participants with some of the topics and questions asked. Be mindful of this and use trigger warnings before conversations concerning abuse, aggression or other crimes, and remind participants that they can withdraw at all times and they can take all breaks they need. They can decide whether to answer and whether to give consent to share their thoughts.

Also, by explaining the activities and the objectives of them, they can trust us better. Both InteRed and CESIE had difficulties in getting participants to provide consent.

The importance of adapting the questions to the public, and not to make them answer them all, but instead letting them choose those they feel comfortable with and for which they have experiences to answer: if they do not have experienced something, they cannot tell you about a time when they did, if they do not have kids they cannot answer about a time when their child did something. This shows how important our unique standpoint is in approaching CSE experiences.

*“I haven’t felt sexual harassment or aggression, except when sometimes as a couple you have unwanted sexual relations with your partner.”*

*A mother, Spain.*



# Conclusions

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In conclusion, we can say that from our experience the Memories & Voices collection activities is a **powerful and useful tool to start the conversation on sexuality and affectivity**. It wasn't only useful in terms of material collection, but it proved valuable for young people to take the space and time for themselves to think about CSE topics and express their feelings about them.

For some people, this was the first time that they were asked simple but meaningful questions, thus producing a stimulating and creative exercise. The Voices activity was seen as very valuable because it contributed to breaking the ice and **overcoming the several taboos** around sexuality in the domestic environment and between generations. and opened up new conversations within the family that they did not use to have, with a long-term impact on the quality of family relationships.

The methodologies succeeded in engaging participants and encouraging them to share their perspectives and experiences. Participants were willing to express themselves and discuss sensitive topics, indicating that the questions created a **safe and non-judgmental environment**. Also, the methodologies gave opportunity to provide insights into participants' knowledge, attitudes and behaviors related to CSE.

And finally, in many cases the activity contributed to increasing **people's curiosity** in the topics and seeking further training, which is the best outcome for any conversation starter like this one!

**Good luck!**

*"You don't remember when you were little (3-4 years old) that I didn't know how to explain about consent and I started to tell you there were parts of the body that could not be touched without your consent, and then the first time I explained it to you, as you were very little, I said "the butt can't be touched, nobody touches your butt unless you want them to..." and you looked at me with a face like "what are you telling me? The next time I started to put in more parts of the body to disguise... then I said "the butt and the feet", so... that was the first phase of consent, so that you could make decisions about who could touch you and which part."*

*A mother to her daughter, Spain*

# Annex 1

## Guiding questions for semi-structured interviews

### GENERAL

1. What would you have liked to know before your first sexual experience? / what would you like to know before you have one?
2. From what sources did you get information about sex education, for example sexual health, know-how, relationships...
3. Did you have any expectations about sex that did not get fulfilled?

### MODULE 1: NAVIGATING RELATIONSHIPS (AFFECTIVITY, LOVE, FAMILY, MARRIAGE,...)

1. How do you feel about your first kiss?
2. How do you feel about your first time?
3. How important do you feel communication is in a couple relationship?
4. Could you talk openly about sex/relationships with your father/mother? At which age and how did you feel?
5. If you are or want to be a single mother, how society makes you feel and what do you feel are the taboos /beliefs regarding your situation?
6. How do you feel about marriage? Can you define marriage in three concepts? What are your role models, examples in terms of marriage?
7. Was family a safe space for you?
8. Are there concepts about sex, gender, relationships, or love... that have changed for you during the course of your life (P)
9. How many family models/types do you think you know?
10. For parents: what are your thoughts / feelings regarding your children receiving sexual education in their schools?

11. How do you perceive the relationship between your parents? How do your parents treat each other?
12. How have your relationships affected your personal lives and choices?
13. Have you felt pressure to have or not have sexual encounters by your social environment (friends, parents, teachers...)?

## **MODULE 2: UNDERSTANDING GENDER (GENDER IDENTITY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, LGTB+ ISSUES, GENDER ROLES, ...)**

1. By what cultural norms regarding your gender roles you feel the most affected?
2. When did you become aware that you belonged to a certain gender in your culture?
3. Do you feel understood /supported by your community/family concerning sexual identity and orientation?
4. Do you feel fear when you openly kiss or show affection to your partner in the street?
5. For trans/non bin: how did school years affect you when developing / finding out your non cis / gender identity?
6. Do you stand up for yourself or others when / if you are (or someone else) is being bullied regarding sexual orientation / identity? Why/why not?
7. If you are queer, do you feel the need to hide it, hide your partner, or avoid using their pronouns when talking about them?
8. Have you ever felt outdated about these topics in relation to your children? (P)
9. As a teenager, how important was it to you to be accepted for your chosen orientation?
10. As a parent of a teenager, how important was it to you that your child was accepted for their chosen orientation?
11. Could you talk openly about your own sexuality with your father/mother? At which age and how did you feel?

### **MODULE 3: PROTECTING AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (ABUSE, HARASSMENT, CONSENT, TOXIC MASCULINITY, ETC; INCLUDING PEER SUPPORT IN CASE OF RETRAUMATIZATION)**

1. Have you ever talked about consent with your parents/children?
2. Have you had any abusive experience and you didn't know what to do?
3. Looking back, can you think of moments in which you are not exactly sure if you have been a victim of GBV? (P)
4. Have you ever experienced harassment?
5. Have you ever seen harassment happening to other people because of their gender? Did you know how to address it?
6. What would you do if you have a friend you think is suffering some kind of abuse /GBV?
7. Do you think that asking for sexual relations is a proof of love?
8. Can you define toxic masculinity? Why would you say it's toxic?
9. Have you ever witnessed an action of GBV? Reactions, thoughts?
10. Have you ever felt uncomfortable with (because of) your partner?
11. How would you define consent? Can you think of a moment in which you were asked to express it?
12. Have you ever felt outdated about these topics in relation to your children? (P)

#### MODULE 4: COMPREHENDING SEXUAL HEALTH (CONTRACEPTION, STI&STDs, ANATOMY, ETC...)

1. Where did you look for information about sexuality?
2. Do you think that you need more information about contraception?
3. What materials do you read to learn about your sexual health?
4. Do you think that porn is a good resource to learn about sexual education?
5. Can you remember any misunderstanding you experienced on sex because of lack of information?
6. Is the health check only a matter for girls?
7. Did they teach you about STIs in school?
8. How have you felt when going to the doctor for sexual health issues?
9. Through which way did you start to learn about sexuality?
10. Where did you learn about sexual health?
11. Do you talk about STIs with your children? If yes, in a positive or forbidding way? (P)
12. Where would you go if you needed information about sex education?
13. How did you live your first body changes during puberty? Did you have anybody to share him or her with?
14. Have you ever felt outdated about these topics in relation to your children? (P)



## **MODULE 5: VALUING CULTURAL DIVERSITY (RACE, RELIGION, ETC...)**

1. Do your cultural background or identity affect the way that you live your sexuality?
2. What kind of cultural practices regarding sexuality or relationships clash with your own or your families?
3. By what cultural norms regarding your gender roles you feel the most affected?
4. Parents: have you ever imagined having a different type of family or relationship than what was the norm in your culture?
5. Have you ever felt more sexualized than your peers because of your religion or the color of your skin?

## **MODULE 6: SEXUAL EDUCATION INCLUDING PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (DISABILITIES, ETC...)**

1. How do you feel that your disability affects your relations?
2. What are the challenges you faced as a teen with special needs/ parent of a teen with special needs?
3. For PWD: how do you feel about your sexual life and about the perceptions other people have on your sexual life?
4. Have you felt supported by professionals in terms of your child's sexuality needs? (P)
5. What taboos do you feel our society has regarding sex in people with special needs?

## Guiding questions for the memories activity

### GENERAL

1. What would you have liked to know before your first sexual experience? / what would you like to know before you have one?
2. From what sources did you get information about sex education, for example sexual health, know-how, relationships...
3. Did you have any expectations about sex that did not get fulfilled?

### MODULE 1: NAVIGATING RELATIONSHIPS (AFFECTIVITY, LOVE, FAMILY, MARRIAGE,...)

1. Tell us about the time when you had your first kiss and how it made you feel
2. Tell us about the time when you had your first sexual relation and how it made you feel
3. Tell us about a time when you felt you could openly talk about sex or relationships with your parents or other trusted adult and how it made you feel
4. Tell us about a time when you felt that society had prejudices about being a single mother and how it made you feel
5. Tell us about the time when you realised there were other models or types of family than yours?
6. Tell us about a time when you felt that your family was or was not a safe space for you
7. Tell us about the first time you fell in love or felt sexually attracted to someone
8. Tell us about a time when you did not agree with the sexual education that you/ your child was or was not receiving in school and why
9. Tell us about a time when you felt comfortable or uncomfortable about your parents' relationships and how they treated each other
10. Tell us about a time when you felt that your relationship had conditioned the choices you made in life and regretted making those choices
11. Tell us about a time when you felt pressure to have or not have sexual relations by your social environment (friends, parents, teachers...)

## MODULE 2: UNDERSTANDING GENDER (GENDER IDENTITY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, LGTB+ ISSUES, GENDER ROLES, ...)

1. Tell us about the first time you realised a certain gender rule was affecting you. How did you react? What did it mean to you?
2. Tell us about the time you became aware of your gender identity / Tell us about a time when you felt that the sex gender role you were assigned at birth was not meant for you
3. Tell us about a time you felt / did not feel understood or supported by your family or your community concerning your sexual identity, orientation or expression
4. Tell us about a time you felt fear of publicly kissing or showing affection to your partner in the streets.
5. Tell us about a time you felt uncomfortable about a certain gender stereotype regarding sexual relations in your culture
6. For trans/non bin: tell us about a time you struggle developing your non cis/ gender identity in school
7. Tell us about a time when someone stood up for you (or you stood up for yourself) while you were being made fun of or bullied because of your sexual orientation / identity
8. Tell us about a time when you felt the need to hide your partner, avoid using their pronouns, or hide your sexual orientation?
9. Tell us about a time when you felt outdated regarding the gender topic in relation to your peers/ children
10. Tell us about a time you felt it was really important that certain person accepted your sexual orientation or gender identity
11. Tell us about a time you felt it was really important that certain person accepted the sexual orientation or gender identity of your child
12. Tell us about a time when you felt you could openly talk about your sexuality with your parents / other trusted adult in your life and how it made you feel

### **MODULE 3: PROTECTING AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (ABUSE, HARASSMENT, CONSENT, TOXIC MASCULINITY, ETC; INCLUDING PEER SUPPORT IN CASE OF RETRAUMATIZATION)**

1. Tell us about a time when you felt unclear about the concept of consent
2. Tell us about a time when you discussed consent with your peers or parents/children
3. Tell us about a time when you wanted to say no, and you did not feel like you could
4. Tell us about a time when you wanted to say no, you did, and you felt proud of it later
5. Tell us about a time when you had an abusive experience and did not know how to react or what to do
6. Tell us about a time when you might have experience GBV in the past, but you are not sure
7. Tell us about a time when you experienced harassment
8. Tell us about a time when you saw harassment happening to other people and how you addressed it
9. Tell us about a time when you thought a friend was suffering some type of abuse and what you did or wish you did
10. Tell us about a time when you felt you had to have sexual relations with someone as a proof of love
11. Tell us about a time when a partner made you feel uncomfortable

#### MODULE 4: COMPREHENDING SEXUAL HEALTH (CONTRACEPTION, STI&STDs, ANATOMY, ETC...)

1. Tell us about a time when you wanted information about sexuality and where did you look for this information
2. Tell us about a time when you wanted information about contraception and where did you look for this information
3. Tell us about a time when you used porn to learn about sexual relations
4. Tell us about a time when you experienced misunderstandings on sex because of lack of information or bad resources
5. Tell us about a time when they taught you about STIs in school. How useful was this information, and how was it portrayed?
6. Tell us about a time you had to go to the doctor for sexual health issues. How did you feel before going? How did the doctor make you feel? Was it overall a normal medical experience?
7. Tell us about the way in which you started to learn about sexuality. What were your resources? With whom were you comfortable sharing them?
8. Tell us about a time when you talked to your children/parents about STIs? What was the approach? Was it positive or forbidding?
9. Tell us how you lived your first body changes in puberty? Did you have anybody to share them with? Were you informed before they happened that they were going to happen?

## **MODULE 5: VALUING CULTURAL DIVERSITY (RACE, RELIGION, ETC...)**

1. Tell us about a time your cultural background or identity affected the way that you live your sexuality
2. Tell us about a time that your cultural practices regarding sexuality or relationships clashed with your own or your family's?
3. Tell us about a time you felt shocked about a cultural or religious norm that concerned you regarding your gender
4. Tell us about a time you imagined having a different type of family or relationship than what was the norm in your culture (P)
5. Tell us about a time you felt sexualized because of the color of your skin or your religious practice

## **MODULE 6: SEXUAL EDUCATION INCLUDING PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (DISABILITIES, ETC...)**

1. Tell us about a time when your disability affect your personal relations
2. Tell us about a challenge you faced as a teen with special needs
3. Tell us about a challenge you faced as a parent of a teen with special needs
4. Tell us about a time you felt that people had biases about your sexual life
5. Tell us about a time you felt or didn't feel supported by professionals in terms of your child's sexuality?
6. Tell us about the time you realized your sexual life might be different than your peers'.

# Partners

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# Loveact

Living positive and intersectional sexuality education for gender-based violence prevention

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