



Championing healthy relationships
and sexual wellbeing

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 and Light

August 2019

Running for acet UK



A huge shout out to supporter Greg who will be running the Ealing half marathon, on September 29th, in aid of acet UK. If you are in the area, please cheer him on!

If you would like to sponsor Greg, you can do this at:
www.bit.ly/runforacetUK

If Greg has inspired you to take on your own challenge to raise money for our work, please get in touch at info@acet-uk.com or call Rachael on 01244 566 111.



Sex education around the world: reflections from Sarah, acet UK CEO

"In a recent focus group with 8 Year 10 students in a Southwark school, their desire to access more Esteem sessions, and to start some of the sessions earlier, came across strongly. One student felt that boys need lessons on consent as early as Year 7. (You can read more about what they had to say on the back page).

I have witnessed this desire for more relationships and sex education from trusted and trained educators in every country I have visited. People may see sex as a taboo topic in Britain due to the stereotypical view of us being rather reserved, yet, sex seems to be a taboo topic everywhere I go.

Around the world, the ACET family are providing young people with vital relationships and sex education, relevant for their context. For example, ACET Ukraine has developed lessons on suicide prevention due to high teenage suicide rates. ACET Nigeria plan to include similar lessons in their programme as suicide rates there are now the 5th highest in the world.

ACET Belarus has a strong emphasis on drugs and alcohol education as part of their programme due to the significant impact that substance abuse has on family relationships across Belarus. Anna, our International Support Officer, and I saw their work in March and were struck by the impact that a former addict's story had on the students. As with our work in the UK and that of the wider ACET family, the combination of hearing true stories and factual information delivered in a memorable way, and learning through active methods, led to students feeling empowered and equipped to make wise life choices.

From inner city London, to rural communities in Nigeria; from youth clubs in Ukraine to schools in slum communities in Uganda; from counselling for adolescent sex workers in Zimbabwe to those listening to HIV prevention messages over radio airwaves in Thailand and the Democratic Republic of Congo, young people are being given the opportunity to explore relationships and sex education topics in a safe and helpful way. Through the ACET family around the world, children and young people are being nourished with the key message that they are loved, valued and have amazing potential."

Uganda

Friends of ACET Uganda (FAU) donors have long supported Nakulabye Junior School, raising money to build the current school and paying the fees of orphans and other vulnerable children who would otherwise have been unable to afford to go to school.

Nakulabye is located within a slum community in a Kampala suburb, where many children are impacted by poverty and HIV. The school aims to provide cheap but quality education to vulnerable children; to be a model for other slum communities; and to provide employment for the local community.

The support of FAU donors has meant that the living conditions of the children has much improved, as the school now has purpose-built classrooms including a nursery section; a modern kitchen; safe areas to play; flush toilets; books and other equipment. The children are also well fed at Nakulabye, as many are not well nourished at home. They receive porridge at break and lunchtime and a piece of fruit each day.

A group of doctors and nurses from Mengo hospital routinely come to the school to provide health services such as providing deworming tablets and administering vaccinations.



Belarus

Earlier this year, ACET UK's Sarah and Anna visited the ACET Belarus team to see them in action. During their stay, they observed a session at a sports college, ACET Belarus talk shows, and their schools work. Here's a snapshot.

At the sports college, Yury engaged 70 students in an interactive session using discussion, humour, videos and stories. The session explored how good relationships can be built and nurtured.

Yury asked the students why they think 60% of marriages in Belarus end in divorce and then offered additional thoughts: getting married too young; wanting different things; having a casual approach to life; being unaware of what a healthy relationship is or of the reality of marriage.

He acknowledged that the 16 to 18-year-olds in the room may have already experienced unhealthy relationships or been betrayed, and reassured them that, even though life may not be easy, it is possible to learn how to have healthy relationships and make good choices.

Yury encouraged the students to think before entering into a relationship. Are we both clear where we stand? Are we expecting the same thing from this relationship? What

qualities am I looking for in a partner? Am I being genuine and honest, and acting with integrity myself?

Yury spoke about the importance of communication and empathy between two people, about listening and giving emotional support. He emphasized that, in successful relationships, partners work together as a team, that it's important to get to know someone before entering into a relationship, and how having multiple partners or one night stands can cause pain and heartbreak.

"From today's session, I have learnt that to make a happy family, I should get to know someone before being in a relationship with them - and the impact this can have on the future of our country."

Tatiana, 18-years-old

Victor from ACET Belarus facilitated a talk show about drug addiction, between three guest panelists (a psychiatrist, a priest and a recovered drug addict) and an audience of college students.

By asking questions of the audience and the panel, Victor established what addiction is, and explored the biological, psychological, economic and social causes. He then led a discussion on the potential consequences of drug addiction on the individual, and their friends, family and community.

Michael, a recovered drug addict, told his story. His father was an alcoholic and, influenced by friends, he started drinking and smoking himself at the age of 10, and was injecting drugs by age 20. *"It starts slowly, you just say you'll try something once but then you keep wanting to try new things."* Michael got into a lot of debt, lost his friends and family, and became suicidal.

Michael then explained that only 2 to 4% of addicts manage to get clean. Nearly all his friends died in their early 20s. Even though he has been clean for 14 years, Michael explained the lasting impact on his physical health - his teeth are decayed and he suffers from joint pain. It was only when he acknowledged that he was an addict, that Michael beat his addiction, with the help of his church.



Victor takes questions from the audience

Through his work as an ACET Belarus volunteer, Michael is now having a significant impact on the lives of many young people through sharing his story. The young people Sarah and Anna met during their visit to Belarus told them that drug dealers are recruiting and targeting their friends, using the lure of income to distribute drugs.

Victor asked the panel and the audience for strategies of how to avoid turning to drugs in the first place. Suggestions included: having goals in life; being honest and open with your parents; having friends that don't take drugs; having somewhere to turn to when you are facing challenges; and having faith in God.

In school number 5, ACET Belarus volunteer, Andre, led a session on friendship with a class of 14-year-olds.

Starting with a game, the young people wrote down proverbs about friendship e.g. 'better to be rich in friends than rich in money' and then took part in a quiz.

Andre then led a discussion about how to make friends, maintain friendships and communicate well. Ideas included: sharing good times and sorrow; showing understanding; helping friends; and having fun together.

He spoke about how it takes time to build friendships, yet they can end quickly, so it's important to think about the choices we make and how we create trust. Andre and his colleague, Yury, then acted out a roleplay about trust.



"Some parents not only know about the seminars and are happy about them, but they sometimes attend themselves to learn!" Assistant to the Headteacher

Ukraine

ACET Ukraine's 'Healthy Youth University' schools work programme is far reaching. Delivered in 219 schools and 13 colleges across 89 cities, thousands of young people are reached each year.

The Healthy Youth University programme is approved by the Ukraine Ministry of Education, and is made up of 10 sessions on a range of relationships, sexual health and life skills topics (including suicide prevention, and drug and alcohol abuse).

Most students receive five core sessions but many also attend additional lessons on other topics, such as cyberbullying and sexting, depending on the needs of the students in a particular school, as identified by their teachers and parents.

Each Healthy Youth University session is interactive, with topic discussions, games, assignments, videos and slides, and several thousand more students attend ACET Ukraine 'Know to live' educational video training sessions.

To complement the work with the students in each school, ACET Ukraine volunteers also run two parent events each year and a training session for the staff, so that the messages the students receive are reinforced at home and by the students' teachers. The parent events also help improve the relationship between child and parent.



Pupils with their Healthy Youth University certificates

The team also offer 'Positive Life' consultations for individuals, either after a session in school or through ACET Ukraine's social networks. Hundreds of teenagers, parents and teachers have accessed this service.



Peter tells his story

"My name is Peter and I'm 13. I have to live in a boarding school five days a week because my mum drinks. My aunt picks up my sister and me for the weekend. For several years I lived with great resentment in my heart for my mother and for life in general. I saw a lot of bad things from my mother: no attention, worries, constant name-calling, beatings, hatred. We had no money and often had no food. After the love languages lesson from ACET, I wrote, "I am ready to forgive my mother." These were not just words. That was all my heart. For several days, I struggled with unforgiveness. I cried and thought about the words of the ACET coach. But then I was determined to give maximum love to my mother and I forgave her.

Thanks to ACET, I realized that I really want to have a happy family. Alcohol-free, without drugs, without bad words, without abortion. I want to find true love. I think that sex is needed only if it is true love."

Thailand

Natya and the ACET Thailand team deliver their SMART life and Sharp Life education programmes in six Singburi secondary schools.

The aim of the programmes is not only to give young people information about HIV, AIDS and other sexual health matters, but also to help them make wise choices regarding relationships and sex. The team talk to the students about drug use and HIV transmission too, which is a growing problem in Thailand.

Young people from the SMART Life programme are involved in ACET Thailand's work in practical ways. They take part in HIV and AIDS awareness activities in the community through local radio broadcasts, especially during Thai festivals. They also accompany ACET Thailand staff on visits to people living with AIDS, and the elderly, in hospital and their homes, taking them gifts of food as well as reading the Bible, singing and praying with them.



Natya with a SMART life group



As well as gathering feedback from young people after every session, the Southwark Esteem team recently ran a focus group with Year 10 students, who have been receiving Esteem sessions each year since they started secondary school.

The results will help us understand the long-term impact of Esteem sessions on young people; identify what has worked well; and inform how we can develop our relationships and sex education programme in the future.

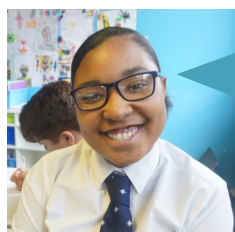
The students were asked what they had thought about the Esteem sessions and educators; how they differed from other RSE lessons they had received; whether there were any particular sessions that had stood out for them; whether the sessions had changed how they think about relationships and sex; and whether they had learnt anything about themselves during the sessions.

We were greatly encouraged by how much the young people had remembered about their sessions over the years, and how their attitudes and opinions had changed as a result.

Here's a sample of the responses we received.



"I thought sex was some rite of passage that we all must do as early as possible but it isn't. We must do what we want and not be pressured." Calum, 15



"Consent was the topic that stood out to me the most only because I thought that I had known everything there was to know about consent but the Esteem sessions introduced me to 3 laws which taught me that consent isn't as easy as just saying yes or no. The Esteem sessions have changed my opinion on sex. They have taught me to be more cautious and careful when it comes to sex." Niamh, 15



"In all honesty, I thought it was going to be just more sex ed: common sense and fairly boring. Turns out it was the complete opposite. They focus a lot on mental health and our emotions rather than just cold hard facts. It makes it more relatable and educational." Connor, 15



"The most important thing that I learned about myself was that I could have mature discussions and ask questions to find out more about a topic. The lessons have changed the way that I think about it [relationships and sex] because I am now more clued up, which means that I know how I would approach certain situations." Joseph, 15

4th October

acet UK Christian Conference

Relationships and sex education: in the classroom and beyond

At this year's acet UK conference, we will be looking at how Christians can be involved in relationships and sex education inside *and outside* the classroom.

Join us for a day of learning, networking and empowerment for youth workers, youth pastors and other Christians who want to help young people navigate the cultural and social pressures around relationships and sex.

Hear from experts in the field, as they share their insight on a range of topics.

Speakers will include:

Keeth Bandara - pastor at City of Lights Church and founder of the Candyshop Conference;

Joshua Heyes - PHD researcher in sexuality and religion; and

Vicky Walker - writer, broadcaster and author of 'Relatable.'

To book your place, visit www.acet-uk.com/training



acet uk

acet UK
Abbey House
Abbey Green
Chester
CH1 2JH

+44(0)1244 566111

info@acet-uk.com
www.acet-uk.com

@esteem_acetUK

acetUK

acet UK is the working name of
AIDS Care Education and Training
Registered Charity No: 299293
Company No: 02245302