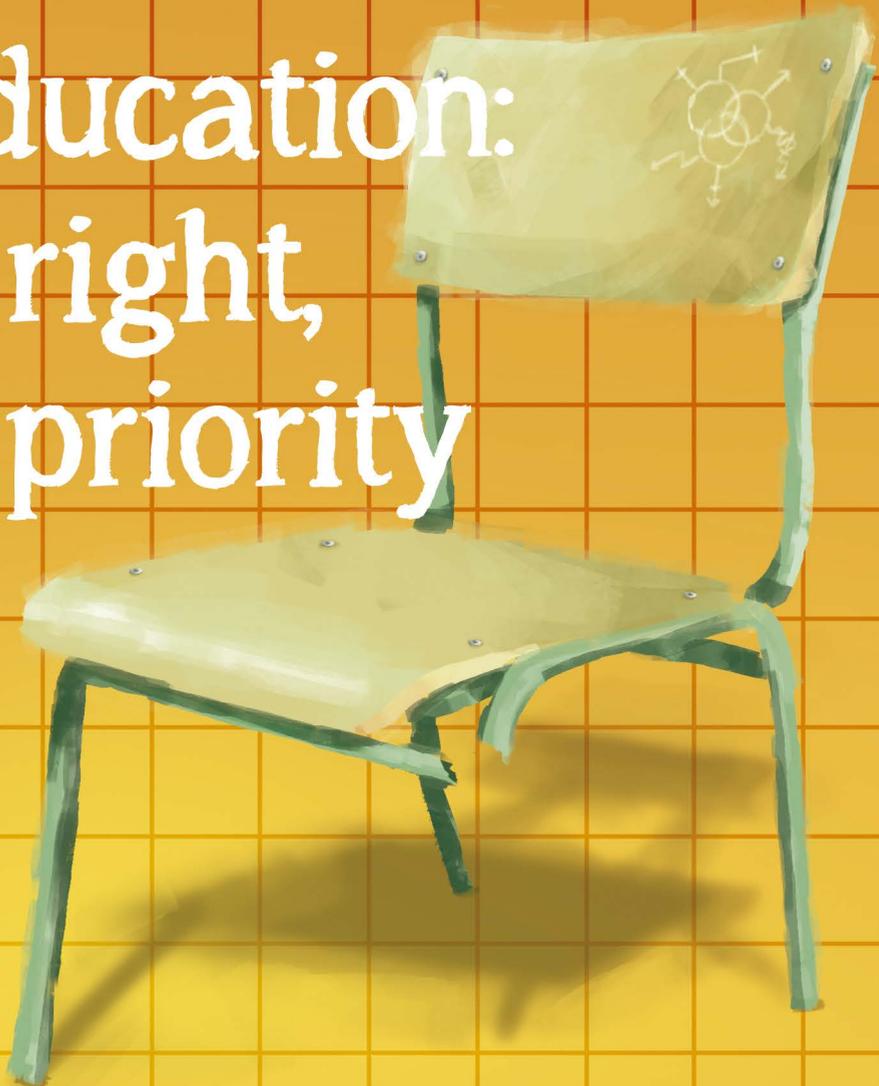


Affective and sexual education: a right, a priority



Affective and sexual education: a right, a priority



ASSOCIACIÓ DE
PLANIFICACIÓ FAMILIAR
DE CATALUNYA I BALEARS

*“The erotic offers a well of replenishing
and provocative force to the woman who
does not fear its revelation”.*

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Although the original text has unfolded terms like profesor-profesora (teacher male - teacher female), commonly used in feminist texts, because the generic term in Spanish or Catalan only has a masculine declension, English has generic terms such as children or parents, which do not distinguish gender but cover both genders. When plural non-generic terms are used in this translation (teachers) one should note that they are meant to include both genders.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

APFCIB	Family Planning Association of Catalonia and Balearics
ASPB	Public Health Agency of Barcelona
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CJAS	Young Contraception and Sexuality Center
CPD	Commission on Population and Development
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HR	Human Rights
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersexual
RSH	Reproductive and Sexual Health
RSR	Reproductive and Sexual Rights
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SPYT	Sexually Prepared Young Teenagers
SRHC	Sexual and Reproductive Health Care
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UN	United Nations Program on AIDS
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

PRESENTATION

Creación Positiva, CooperAcció and the Family Planning Association of Catalonia and Balearics (APFCIB), we have jointly developed this study about affective and sexual education in Catalonia. The study is framed within the project *Sexual and Reproductive Rights in the Global Agenda and the Agenda of Catalonia*, which aims to create a space of common training on the international agendas related to reproductive and sexual rights (RSR). With the project we aim to incorporate at a local level whatever comes up from the participation in international projects, like the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the Commission on Population and Development (CPD) from United Nations. The objective is to work for the sustainable development goals and, at the same time, raise awareness and empower the organized civil society of Catalonia in order to have a voice in international and multilateral decision discussions.

This study examines from which models affective and sexual education is taught in Catalonia, assuming that it is not present in the official curriculum in a concrete form and lays in a grey area, depending on teachers will. This way, the study pretends to illustrate various **shortcomings in the guarantee of RSR** in Catalonia, starting from the formal gap that exists in this subject in the public education in Catalonia and, consequently, the inequality existing in affective and sexual education. Considering that education is the most powerful transforming tool to communicate these rights and make them

effective, this research goes into the pedagogical interventions that exist in the compulsory schooling in Catalonia. Considering that affective and sexual education has to be the space to understand sexuality, sexual and gender diversity and promote non-discrimination, affective relationships on an equal basis and many other aspects, we examine how it is taught in order to think critically and exert a positive influence. We hope that this research will help to understand the state of the question in Catalonia, since there are no studies on the subject.

At the international level, sexual education is conceived as essential in order to achieve the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDG) set up by UN, and thus guarantee the reproductive and sexual rights of all people. In spite of being integrated in all the global agendas (UN, WHO, UNESCO, UNFPA), in most countries it is deficient.

International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) globally defines the current situation of sexual education as “too little, too late, too biological”¹.

■ **METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**

For the conduct of the study a **feminist methodology** has been carried out, ensuring that the research pays attention to unequal power relationships, the frontiers of inclusion and exclusion and the situation of the researchers during all the process. The feminist methodology takes into account the norms and gender roles, and the power structures that arise between gender, race, ethnics, class, neocolonialism and heteronormativity, among others. An analysis based on gender allows for the identification and deconstruction of masculinities and femininities apparently inherent in practices and concepts in the field of sexuality, and subsequently offers alternative proposals.

Thus, the conceptualization of affective and sexual education in this research is done from a gender perspective, and it is closely linked to reproductive and sexual rights, as an empowering instrument and key element

¹ *Everyone's right to know: delivering comprehensive sexuality education for all young people*. IPPF (2016) p. 9

for the development of a society. The research is built on the argument that sexual education is a fundamental right of any person to know about their body and sexuality.

The main **methods** used to obtain the information are the **revision and analysis of relevant documentation** (reports, curriculum, study plans, current strategies of the different governments, laws and recent government measures) and semi-structured **interviews** to people involved. In particular, in order to elaborate the context, we have consulted the laws and government measures related to the most recent reproductive and sexual rights, global and local studies about affective and sexual education and reproductive and sexual rights and diverse educational materials. To analyze the current needs and capture the existing educational materials we have interviewed professionals from the educational world, teachers, external trainers, technicians from public institutions as well as expert people who work in the field of sexual education. Due to time and space constraints, the majority of the interviews have been carried out in the area of Barcelona. Nevertheless, efforts have been made to have an overview of the territory of Catalonia.

I. AFFECTIVE AND SEXUAL EDUCATION IN INTERNATIONAL AGENDAS

The exhaustive Operational Review of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), after 2014² reached consensus that human rights investment, people’s capacities and dignity—in multiple sectors and throughout life—is the basis for sustainable development. In particular, the protection and promotion of human rights are conceived as a condition sine qua non for the improvement of girls and women’s well-being, as well as the requirement for them to exercise their reproductive rights. The ICPD concludes that the narrow relationship between sexual and reproductive health and population dynamics are a key factor to take into account for the sustainable development of the planet.

Thus, RSR and their dissemination are also placed at the center of SDG established by United Nations³. Particularly, in three of the SDG, sexual education is presented as one of the most powerful instruments to achieve a healthy life and guarantee human rights:

- **SDG 3: Good health and well-being.** It states that by 2030, universal access to sexual and reproductive health services has to be ensured, including family planning, information and education, as well as the inclusion of reproductive health in national strategies and programs.

² Commission on Population and Development <<http://www.unfpa.org/icpd>>

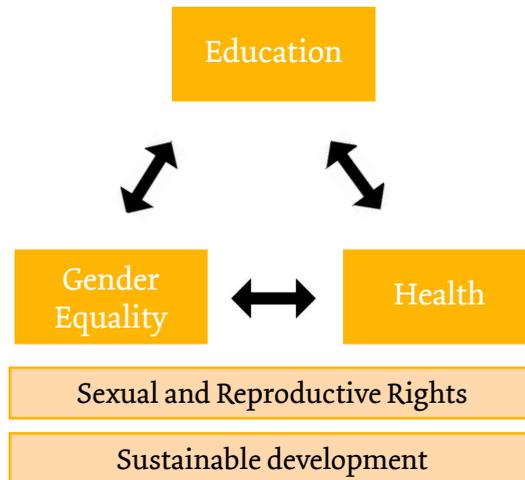
³ Sustainable Development Goals official website [online]

- **SDG 4: Quality education.** Based on the coeducational model, it manifests the importance of educating without stereotyped roles, offering an inclusive vision, without prejudices. Given that school is a mode of transmission of patriarchy, androcentrism and sexism, this goal proposes to pay attention to the content of books, the sexist language used in them and the low coverage of women's role and legacy, in order to stop the existing gender bias and the exclusion of women in science.
- **SDG 5: Gender equality.** Within this goal, universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights are included, as agreed, in accordance with the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action.

In short, UN recognizes on three occasions the importance of education in affectivity and sexuality. On the one hand, as a fundamental part of a person's health and well-being, and on the other hand as a crucial factor to achieve gender equality. According to the supranational organization, everybody needs to have access to quality sexual education⁴. Total care education allows young people (boys and girls) to make informed decisions about their sexuality and health. Hence the need to implement life skills-based educational programs with a perspective that helps to foster human rights, gender equality and citizenship empowerment, and which facilitates decision-making about their sexual health.

Not only have international agendas become aware of the importance of sexual education in terms of the right to education, a healthy life and gender equality, but also as a matter framed within the total care education of the individual and society. It is also a matter of sustainable development.

⁴ Sustainable Development Goals official website [online]



This interdisciplinary approach can be seen in the various initiatives carried out by the agencies engaged with health, education and gender equality. The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed criteria that should be followed by sexual education programs in such a way that they are productive and guarantee the rights of students.

UNESCO —UN agency dedicated to education, science and culture— has addressed sexual education as a matter of vital importance for the development of boys and girls. The agency has also prepared materials with international technical guidelines with the objective that those responsible for decision-making on health and education will have the tools to face sexuality teaching. At the same time, UNESCO collaborates with other divisions of the supranational organization, as UNAIDS, WHO, UNFPA and UNICEF, a fact that illustrates the transversality of the issue.

To sum up, UN Sustainable Development Goals are a reflection of the numerous areas in which gender equality, health and education become goals that jointly help to achieve many of these goals (health, sustainable development and human rights guarantee).

II.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: WHAT DOES SEXUAL AND AFFECTIVE EDUCATION COVER AND IMPLY?

The theoretical framework proposed by the IPPF establishes that sexual education must be comprehensive. This means that it must include key topics about sexuality and prevention of AIDS and STI, but not only these aspects. Sexual education goes beyond prevention of bad results for one's health or unplanned pregnancy. It conceives sexuality as a positive aspect of life and a lot broader dimension, "educating people about the various forms of pleasure that exist and escaping from the idea of genitality" as María Honrubia points out, member of the APFCIB committee. Sexual education goes hand in hand with affectivity. This component tries to strengthen "the importance of loving and respecting oneself, and taking into account people with whom we interact" —Honrubia indicates— considering sexual and gender identity diversity, concludes the expert.

Sexual and affective education must be based on the principles of human rights, and on the laws that guarantee human dignity, equal treatment and opportunities for participation⁵. Therefore, it must be oriented to the promotion of a responsible citizenship, critical thinking abilities and civic engagement. The last report from IPPF indicates that "sexual education programs are a positive investment since they empower, build self-esteem, provide information about rights and make people enjoy a better health and well-being"⁶.

⁵ *Everyone's right to know: delivering comprehensive sexuality education for all young people*. IPPF (2016)

⁶ IPPF (2016), p. 4

Thus, it is well documented that affective and sexual education has a positive effect in the community, because it is a healthier and informed society about their rights.

From a human rights and gender perspective, the UNFPA proposes a comprehensive sexual education based on three pillars, allowing it to be implemented in any country:

- 1. Universal values of human rights.** Affective and sexual education becomes the tool to promote equality among genders and human rights, as well as the right to health and non-discrimination. It is an instrument to guarantee sexual and reproductive rights for all.
- 2. A comprehensive gender focus.** International agreements require equality among genders. At the same time, researches on comprehensive sexual education confirm that this is the key to its effectiveness. Beyond curricula, the gender perspective combines efforts to eliminate harmful gender norms in the learning environment.
- 3. Comprehensive and scientifically accurate information.** Students have the right to be informed to have a healthy but also satisfactory sexual life, with knowledge of the right to pleasure⁷.

Although childhood sexuality differs compared to that of adults in many aspects —as for example, in its expression— it is understood that a boy or a girl are sexed beings from the beginning of their life⁸. As the child grows, certain doubts, questions and behaviors arise: pleasure in showing parts of their own body, looking at others, showing embarrassment in front of other people, etc. These have to be answered pedagogically, in a manner appropriate to the child's age, and transmit that questions around sexuality are positive. It is necessary to bear in mind the psychosexual development of the child, their physical, emotional, cognitive and social development.

⁷ UNFPA Operational Guidance for Comprehensive Sexuality Education: A focus on Human rights and Gender, UNFPA (2014)

⁸ Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe, WHO (2010)

In this sense, affective and sexual education and sexuality are much more than covering reproduction and risk prevention. It helps the boy or the girl develop sensations and body image , and at the same time boost their self-confidence. It also contributes to their development in order to make free decisions⁹.

⁹ WHO (2010)

III.

MORE THAN A RIGHT TO FULFILL: ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF AFFECTIVE AND SEXUAL EDUCATION

Based on various policy frameworks as well as on the opinion from the expert people interviewed, we mention the main points for which proportioning an affective and sexual education is more than a right to fulfill. It is a priority for the society to move towards equality, democracy and justice.

■ SEXUALITY IS A CENTRAL PART OF THE HUMAN BEING

All people are sexed beings from birth and have the potentiality of developing their sexuality one way or another¹⁰. Sexual education helps to prepare children for life in general and specially to **build and maintain satisfactory relationships** that contribute to the development of personality and self-esteem in a positive way. David Paricio, director of Sidastudi, adds that “it is a very important dimension of the person since it has to do with how we interact with each other, and if it is well developed it can lead to greater happiness”. Rosa Bofill, retired teacher from the school Barrufet (Barcelona), argues that “you cannot form whole people if the subject of sexuality has not been elaborated”. Jèssica Obispo, teacher at the high school Sant Andreu (Barcelona), concludes that “if you understand education as something more than knowledge transmission, and as a complete formation of an individual, then this type of content, values, etc. are essential for the complete education of the student”.

10 IPPF (2014)

IT IS A RIGHTS ISSUE

Sexual education is based on human rights and more concretely on the sexual and reproductive rights of all people, as stated by the WHO. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child clearly establishes the right to information and the obligation of States to provide children with the necessary educational measures. Thus, **sexual education is an instrument to guarantee that sexual and reproductive rights will be informed.**

In Article 8 of IPPF Declaration on the right to education and information one can read: “All persons, without discrimination, have the right to education and information generally and to comprehensive sexuality education and information necessary and useful to exercise full citizenship and equality in the private, public and political domains”¹¹.

SEXUAL EDUCATION CONTRIBUTES TO INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

When we adopt an holistic vision of sexuality and sexual behavior, which goes beyond an approach centered on the prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (ITS), comprehensive education on sexuality allows children and young people to **develop life skills**¹². Education about consent or non-consent is essential for building healthy and respectful relationships, good sexual health and the protection of potentially harm vulnerable people. Teaching young people how to recognize and respect others’ personal limits can help create a society where nobody feels ashamed to voluntarily participate in or refuse sexual activity.

Experts and professionals interviewed affirm that sexual education is also a very effective method to **empower students** to be who they want to be and make responsible and informed decisions. In short, it is a key factor to personal development —“it is a skill for life, it is part of becoming one’s own master”— states teacher Antonia Maria Maura from the high school

¹¹ Observatory of sexual and reproductive rights [online]

¹² IPPF (2016)

and school Costa i Llobera from Barcelona. Rosa Aznar, from the high school Esteve Terrades (Cornellà de Llobregat) states that “school is an oasis where we can implement revolutionary processes, where people can be more protected, where diversity can be most treated [...]”. Rosa Sanchis, teacher of Catalan from the high school Isabel de Villena from Valencia and author of the blog *Karícies*, gives examples of former students who have identified violent relationships or have dared to come out thanks to her affective and sexual education classes.

PROMOTION OF SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Sexual education is the ideal channel to promote adequate information about the physical, cognitive, social, emotional and cultural aspects of sexuality, contraception, prevention of STI and sexual coercion¹³. Affective and sexual education tries **to revert the installed prejudices and perceptions around sexuality as a threat to people’s health**. With the information gathered in recent years and the process of science, STI are treatable, and there are multiple family planning methods to prevent unwanted pregnancies. In addition, UNESCO brings together that effective education on sexuality represents a vital element in HIV prevention, being essential for the achievement of goals regarding universal access to reproductive health, as well as for HIV prevention, treatment, cure and support¹⁴. Sexual education teaches sexuality from a point of view of pleasure and the rights to have a satisfactory sexual life. Thus, questions about sexuality are less of a taboo or something forbidden.

PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY

A sexual education with gender perspective works to **deconstruct myths and beliefs** around feminine and masculine sexuality. According to the UNFPA,

¹³ WHO (2010)

¹⁴ UNAIDS (2006) in *International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education: An evidence-informed approach for schools, teachers and health educators*, UNESCO (2010)

integrating gender perspective may influence to **reduce violence and bullying based on gender**, and to promote more equitable relationships between girls and boys¹⁵. María Honrubia, expert in affective and sexual education coincides with this prediction and emphasizes that a sexual education that talks about the importance of loving and respecting oneself is preventive of gender-based violence. In addition, if it includes sexual diversity and gender identity as well as the diversity of sexual orientation and tendency, it would also be preventive of other types of violence as the phobia against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersexual (LGBTI) communities.

From the centers, teacher Jèssica Obispo points out the importance of sexual education in secondary school, because stereotyped behaviors are increasingly signaled. Therefore, there is the need to break with those behaviors and deal with these issues as soon as possible. For this reason, gender perspective is crucial for addressing affectivity and sexuality.

■ EDUCATING IN AFFECTIVITY

The WHO also includes the importance of being capable of building egalitarian relationships based on mutual knowledge and respect for the needs and limits of other people. This contributes to the prevention of sexual abuse and violence. Marta Ribas, O.S.E coordinator at the high school and school Turó de Roquetes of Barcelona, corroborates it.

In a context of teenage pregnancies, unequal relationships and violences, among many other problems, affective and sexual education is fundamental. For Ribas, **affective** education is the key to influence students' **self-esteem**, prevent risky behaviors, stop the perpetuity of certain attitudes, etc. Ribas stresses the emotional side, since it is crucial and interconnected with many other subjects that affect students, as for example the **management of emotions**. If there is a good educational and affection grounding, the road to sexuality is much easier. According to the WHO, affective and sexual

¹⁵ UNFPA (2014)

education allows us to develop as sexed beings, learning to express our feelings and needs in order to live sexuality in a gratifying manner, as well as to develop our gender identity.

PREVENTION OF RISKY BEHAVIORS, VIOLENCES AND DISCRIMINATIONS

Many studies show that around two thirds of the comprehensive sexuality education programs that have been evaluated lead to the **reduction of one or more risky behaviors**¹⁶. Experts note that working on sexual and affective health has an impact in the prevention of substance abuse, eating disorders, mental illnesses, as well as **violence and bullying** inflicted in the high schools.

¹⁶ UNFPA (2014)

IV. SEXUAL EDUCATION IN CATALONIA EDUCATIONAL CENTERS

1// LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Either in Catalonia or the Spanish State, sexual education is not an official subject. Nevertheless, the guarantee of sexual and reproductive rights appears on numerous occasions, and sexual education is contemplated as a right and a vital topic in a number of laws and government measures, such as the following:

- **Organic law 2/2010, on sexual and reproductive health and voluntary termination of pregnancy.**

On chapter I, regarding public policies, sexual education is covered in Article 5, where it is indicated that public powers must guarantee “information, affective and sexual and reproductive education in the formal contents of the education system”¹⁷. Further on, on chapter III, on “measures in the field of education”, Article 9 exclusively deals with “the incorporation of training in sexual and reproductive health in the education system”¹⁸. The article specifies that training in sexual and reproductive health must include a comprehensive approach that contributes to gender equality and pays attention to gender-based violence; recognition and acceptance of sexual diversity; harmonic development of sexuality in relation to young people ; prevention of STI and specially HIV and the prevention of unwanted pregnancies. On

¹⁷ Organic law 2/2010, p. 6 (translated from Spanish)

¹⁸ Organic law 2/2010, p. 7 (translated from Spanish)

the other hand, the article sets out that the incorporation of health and sexual and reproductive health in the education system takes into account the reality and needs of the most vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities. Next, Article 10 on training activities points out that public authorities will support the educational community in the conduct of training activities related to affective-sexual education, facilitating information to the parents.

Finally, chapter IV presents the executive tool of the law: the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy. In the strategy it is recommended to foster sexual education in primary and secondary school, with a holistic view of sexuality and diversity.

- **Law 17/2015 for effective equality between men and women.**

The law approved by the Parliament of Catalonia mentions sexual education in the context of coeducation. It gathers that “The educational Administration must offer coeducation training to their teaching staff, including sexual education and education against male violence [...]”¹⁹. The law commands further on “the implementation of a sexual and affective education that favors the building of a positive, healthy sexuality that respects diversity and avoids all type of prejudice on grounds of sexual and affective orientation”²⁰.

- **Law 11/2014, to guarantee the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersexual people and to eradicate homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.**

Approved by the Parliament of Catalonia, the law has not been deployed yet. Article 12 belongs to education and highlights that coeducation must be guaranteed, as well as the incorporation of sexual and gender diversity in textbooks, center projects and tutorial action.

¹⁹ Law 17/2015, p. 14

²⁰ Law 17/2015, p. 13

- **Law 14/2010 on the rights and opportunities in childhood and adolescence.**

Approved in 2010 by the Parliament of Catalonia, on Health chapter, Article 44 gathers the right to the prevention, protection and promotion of health, and in particular the physiology of reproduction, the health hazard of a pregnancy at a very early age, the prevention of STI and HIV, and also the promotion of a responsible sexuality.

- **Law 5/ 2008 on women's right to eradicate male violence.**

This law, approved by the Parliament of Catalonia, mentions the importance of effective coeducation with the aim of transmitting messages free from heteronormativity and androcentrism.

- **Government measure to promote sexual and reproductive health in the city of Barcelona.**

In 2014, Barcelona City Council approves a measure with the goal of improving sexual and reproductive health of Barcelona's population. It has a strategic line dedicated to education that aims, among others, "to increase coverage of activities related to affective-sexual education, incorporating gender perspective, sexual diversity, diverse cultural values as the base to prevent violence (male violence, homophobic bullying...) and to facilitate continuous teacher training in the affective-sexual and reproductive and sexual area"²¹.

- **Government measure for the implementation of a Schools and High Schools Network for equal treatment and non-discrimination.**

Barcelona City Council approves on the same year a coeducation program, with a perspective of prevention of male violence and

²¹ Government measure to promote sexual and reproductive health in the city of Barcelona (2014), p. 21.

discrimination for reasons of diversity, and at the same time the promotion of equitable relationships and respectful on the recognition of difference.

A transverse work on teacher training is done, principally in two areas: sexual and gender diversity, and functional and ethnic diversity with the objective that these teachers will subsequently work on these concepts in the subjects on a cross-cutting basis. After having carried out a pilot trial, its implementation is being evaluated.

In parallel to these laws and government measures, an educational reform backed by the Ministry of Education takes place in 2013. It makes topics on affective-sexual education disappear, since the subject “citizenship education” is eliminated, in which the treatment of related issues is included²².

2// ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

The UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which considers “the right of everyone to have control over their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence”²³ looks at the detail any legislative and executive action from the Spanish state related to gender equality. Thanks to the report from the Shadow Platform Cedaw Spain²⁴, which countered the official one sent by the state Government, CEDAW Committee gave an important wake-up call to the policies of the Spanish state.

In the last report it lays the cards on the table on the insufficient sexual education in the Spanish state. Among the list of sources of concern, they criticize the substitution of the subject “Citizenship education and human

²² Elena Cabrera, “España ignora la educación sexual” *Eldiario.es*, January 13 2013. Online document.

²³ *Concluding Observations on Spain combined eighth and seventh periodic reports CEDAW* (2015), p. 2.

²⁴ The CEDAW Shadow Platform is comprised of 50 non-governmental organizations of women, international cooperation and human rights that elaborate the Shadow Report on the implementation of CEDAW in Spain.

rights” for a course called “Ethical values”. It is argued that this change of approach eliminates the human rights perspective and frames certain debates as moral or ethical. The report also demonstrates the concern at the fact that in many schools there is no comprehensive health nor reproductive and sexual rights education, on a mandatory basis or age-adjusted. The report highlights that the leadership team of every educational center decides how to teach sexual education, instead of taking part on education policies. The critique is followed by a recommendation of implementing, as part of the standard curriculum, the compulsory -comprehensive and age-adjusted- teaching of health and reproductive and sexual rights. They specifically mention the importance of teaching responsible sexual behavior and prevention of early pregnancies and STI²⁵.

Despite CEDAW’s report and the fact that sexual education is part of the National Strategy on Sexual and Reproductive Health introduced in the Law on Sexual and Reproductive Health and voluntary termination of pregnancy, no progress has been made.

On the other hand, in the *barometer on women’s access to modern contraceptive choice in 16 EU countries* (IPPF, 2014), the need to improve sexual education in all the countries studied is clear. As regards the most characteristic aspects of affective and sexual education in the Spanish state, the barometer highlights the fact that the Spanish law does not indicate how it has to be included in the school curriculum (in case the center/teachers decide to teach affectivity and sexuality) nor is there a specific allocated budget. Besides, the age at which the subject should be started is not specified, nor is teacher training planned. Thus, affective and sexual education training is in hands of teachers’ ambition and good will. They can acquire training on their own, although it is not compulsory and should be done outside of working hours, or rely on external interventions from associations, NGO and private entities, sometimes publicly sponsored, to sensitize and train the student²⁶.

²⁵ *Concluding Observations on Spain combined eighth and seventh periodic reports CEDAW* (2015)

²⁶ *Barometer on Women’s Access to modern contraceptive choice in 16 UE countries. Conclusions and policy*

Finally, the study presents some policy recommendations for sexual education to be, firstly, obligatory, so that the right to affective and sexual education is effective, egalitarian and everybody has access to it. Secondly, that a budget for the task is allocated and finally, that content guides for teachers are developed, as well as adequate training for this group.

With regard to Catalonia, no specific studies that evaluate the education system and the state of affective and sexual education have been found. This fact already shows the little attention attracted by the subject and the little awareness on the theme. However, affective and sexual education is also an unequal subject depending on the centers. The Catalan legislation commands its execution in various laws —as detailed above— but this does not guarantee its implementation. As it happens at state level, there are no guidelines for the implementation and execution of these articles and none of the laws have been deployed to this day.

3// EXISTING MODELS AND INTERVENTIONS IN CATALONIA

The situation of affective and sexual education in Catalonia suffers from the same weaknesses than in other parts of Spain. The subject does not appear as mandatory in the curriculum, but the education center management team has the decision-making power about what to teach and how to do it, and they are often assisted by the city council or the external offer from an association. Therefore, there is widespread discontent around the current state of sexual education. Experts and teachers express their frustration towards the dominant pedagogical model, which consists of a one-off nature and very short external intervention.

The director of the Young Contraception and Sexuality Center (CJAS), Jordi Baroja, illustrates the problem this way:

“Sexual education in education centers is basically nonexistent, since it is a voluntary subject, based on a few hours training in the second cycle of O.S.E , when young people have already ventured themselves in the world of sexual relations.”

Thus, Baroja puts on the table that the important weight of the subject rests on external training. This decision is made due to a lack of training among the teachers. Baroja also expresses an important feature to consider, which is delay. Teachers know that some students start having sexual relations in the first cycle of O.S.E and, in this sense, sexual education arrives late.

The expert in sexual education, Pere Font, fails sexual education in Catalonia because there is no official nor obligatory program. Another factor to be taken into account is that without the status of a subject, sexual education can become a risky or uncomfortable job for the teachers. Despite the rotundity of Font’s words, from the Consortium of Education in Barcelona, it is said that sexual and affective education exists and it is reflected in preschool, primary, and secondary school curricula. Maria

José Cesena, responsible of Health programs, exposes that, in preschool, it appears as a capacity, the fact of becoming and acting autonomously, respecting oneself and others. In primary school it is part of the skills, and it is indicated that emotions and feelings have to be worked through. Finally, in secondary school, sexual education is included in two areas: the scientific and physiological and the affective part, where the understanding of sexual diversity is contemplated, etc.

Therefore, sexual education appears transversally, especially if it is part of the center program. This way, emotions, respect for difference and others, etc. is jointly fostered by all teachers. Transversality is based on trust in the teachers, and she stresses that it must be a philosophy and organizational culture of the Consortium, who believes that it is more effective to highlight the need rather than imposing a subject or a mandatory content. From the Consortium, training is done, as well as pedagogy about the importance of sexual education in a cross-cutting way, and therefore they choose not to impose it in a concrete space of the curriculum. However, is this transversality really effective?

3.1 TYPOLOGY OF PEDAGOGICAL INTERVENTIONS

Sexual and affective education is taught principally through external interventions and the internal work of the teachers in the center. Concretely, we can distinguish three typologies of interventions that nowadays characterize the Catalan educational system.

I. Sexual and affective education through an external intervention

It is the model that puts the responsibility of addressing sexuality and affectivity on the shoulders of external trainers who organize workshops and specific activities from time to time. These centers assign some hours of tutoring, often during the second cycle of O.S.E, to receive a workshop facilitator from associations, or rather following programs provided by some

public body. At internal level, the school or high school is limited to cover sexuality from a biologist perspective in subjects such as Learning about the World or Biology, as it happens in the school Àngel Baixeras (Barcelona):

“...although for the teachers this is a relevant issue, it is few materialized, and whether sexuality and affectivity are covered or not depends on the interest of the teacher.”

Teacher Mercè Garcés, school Àngel Baixeras, from Ciutat Vella (Barcelona)

Teacher Garcés points out that tutoring also become the space where one can deepen into questions of values, but one does not have access to training, and there is no scheduling coming from the center.

This weakness among the teachers brings up a fundamental issue: while training on affectivity and sexuality is in hands of consultancies or private associations, an externalization of sexual education is taking place. Then, it is becoming a private, not public, issue. This externalization of one part of the education of children and young people is not regulated by any criterion that has to be satisfied or perspectives that it must integrate, which brings up another dilemma regarding contents or discourse transmitted.

II. Mixed model: internal work and external intervention

This model of pedagogical intervention is the most common one among schools and high schools that has been studied. It combines work in the center, either in elective subjects, synthesis credits or specific activities, with the extra intervention of workshop facilitators who provide knowledge and debate around more complex themes such as prevention of risky behaviors, gender-based violence, bullying, etc.

An example of this model is the school Canigó, in Sant Just Desvern. Anna Castellón, tutor of 6th grade, points out that apart from having some

external workshop, they work with emotions in the second cycle and do interdisciplinary projects, for instance about advertising, where sexism and gender stereotypes are treated.

Another case of the mixed model is the high school and school Turó de Roquetes, in Barcelona. The high school is open to any external support that supports sexual and affective education from the O.S.E and at the same time they try to work on it in the center. The O.S.E coordinator of the center, Marta Ribas, notes what follows:

“... there are great needs because of socioeconomic context and as a result, we are open to everything. [...] Despite the numerous programs and activities we do, the issue is still not sorted out.”

Teacher Marta Ribas, high school and school Turó de Roquetes, in Nou Barris (Barcelona)

The teacher argues that the center accepts all types of workshops organized by various organizations and public institutions, from *Let's talk about it (Hablemos de ello)* from the ASPB to the Sexually Prepared Young Teenagers (JASP) from the ASSIR. Not only do they tackle the subject from a sanitary perspective of risky behaviors prevention, but they also count with teams from Social Services, nurses and educators from the street to reflect on self-esteem, gender-based violence, etc. In short, they try to cover affectivity and sexuality from as many points of view as possible.

Internally, Marta Ribas claims that there is no transversality rule, but she applies it in her Catalan subject. Ribas concludes that affectivity is the only way to transmit knowledge and develop a bond with the students. Nevertheless, it is not well integrated or structured, in a very complex context, where sexual and affective education is more important than ever. Problems that include unequal relationships between students, discriminatory behaviors and unwanted pregnancies, among others, still are a reality which is difficult to change. One of the dangers of having specific projects that do not belong

to the project of the center is that it ends up being little consistent and does not help to implant conducive cultures that help to prevent the problems mentioned above. In these cases, external interventions must be very well adapted to the needs of the students and have to go hand in hand with a much more profound internal work.

III. Sexual and affective education taught transversally

This last pedagogical model is the less widespread. The schools and high schools teach affective and sexual education in a cross-cutting way through its incorporation in the project of the center. In Barcelona, we find at least two cases: the school Barrufet and the high school and school Costa i Llobera.

Both of them are based in very solid coeducational models that have been developed to the extent possible. Rosa Bofill, retired teacher of the school Barrufet defines transversality as the programming of activities with boys and girls in all educational stages and in an experience-based way. Bofill highlights that:

“Teachers are responsible of affective and sexual education, since they are the ones who have a day by day link.”

Teacher Rosa Bofill, school Barrufet in Sants (Barcelona)

The ideology behind this working method commented by Bofill lies in demonstrating that sexual and affective education has no special shape but it is a quotidian and vital issue that has to be addressed. The tutor of the group tends to be the closest link for the student and he/she is the one who, through individual tutoring or by accompanying projects about students' experiences manages to educate life skills.

For transversality to be effective, it has to be included in the project of the center. Rosa Artigal, ex-director of the high school Costa i Llobera (Barcelona),

says that it is a transversal issue because there are numerous moments all the way through the day to talk about it. In 1st grade, one of the projects of the year is the growth process (experiences about how they have arrived to the world, how they have grown up and all the challenges they have around sexual education). In 5th grade they work on the body and organs, but it is linked to a much more conscientious work of emotions. Teachers cover in a cross-cutting way education on affectivity, sexuality, values, self-knowledge and diversity, among others, all the way through various subjects, as Antonia Maria Maura, teacher of the center, comments.

Besides the examples of the centers, there is a ground-breaking case, this time in the Community of Valencia. It is Rosa Sanchis, teacher at the high school Isabel de Villena (Valencia) who starts teaching sexual education in tutoring hours and later incorporates sexual and affective education in her Catalan classes. To address the issue she uses her own blog, where she prepares activities based on songs, movies, texts...and students must leave comments, producing narrative and argumentative texts, among others. Sanchis decides to teach this knowledge from a gender perspective and with an open mind, with the goal of questioning the hegemonic sexual model and promoting the legitimization of personal pleasures outside the models. In these lines, she intends to question LGTBphobia with more concrete actions.

Sexual education taught by Sanchis works the social skills of the students, as for example communication, safe sex negotiation and the relationship with one's own body —which tends to be a bad one, especially among girls—.

3.2 PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES

In the different educational interventions analyzed in the previous section, two approaches have principally been detected, that is, the medical preventive approach or rather the comprehensive approach with a gender perspective.

- **Medical and preventive approach**

This approach is based on biologist and health parameters in a restricted sense, covering prevention of STI and unwanted pregnancies. This pedagogical intervention starts from a physiological perspective and it is centered in applying a normative explanation on how to avoid potential risks of sexuality with a discourse based on fear. It is also called “medical-restorative” because it aims to minimize the negative consequences of sexual activity (María Honrubia). This type of approach is created around a discourse on the right and wrong behavior and it leaves no room for reflection or debate.

This is the approach found in textbooks when addressing the issue of reproduction, and it is also the dominant model in external interventions during secondary school, as it is the case in the program *Let's talk about it*. The program created by the Public Health Agency of Barcelona (ASPB) follows an informative and hetero-normative model which revolves around sexual and reproductive health. However, in the last years they have included social skills education, partner communication, etc. They have also included supplementary activities which go beyond, as for example the promotion of organizations and sexuality centers from their environment, as the Young Contraception and Sexuality Center (CJAS) or visits from Sexual and Reproductive Health Attention (ASSIR). The program has demonstrated to be able to provoke conductive changes in the students, a fact that meets the initial objectives. Therefore, content and methodology are provided, but teachers are entitled to put it into practice. In principle, this is a positive characteristic recommended by the WHO, but the lack of teacher training makes that not everybody feels comfortable when is time to share it.

- **Comprehensive approach with gender perspective**

The second perspective that exists is the model recommended by international organizations as the WHO, the UNFPA or UNESCO. This model is definitely less common, present in those educational centers where sexual education is incorporated to the project of the center or counts with external workshops from certain associations that work from this approach. A precise explanation is the following:

“The comprehensive approach consists of a social, relational and affective vision of sexuality [...] which includes certain dimensions of the medical model, but from a psychosocial and cultural perspective.”

Mirta Lojo, responsible of the Network of Schools
for equality and non-discrimination

This model results in the treatment of prejudice and removes false beliefs, as well as abusive relationships and male violence, but it also promotes the knowledge and positive relationship with one’s own body. It also covers the right to individual pleasure or in company. The importance of taking care of interpersonal relationships and the recognition of diversity as an inherent characteristic of existence. Therefore, affective and sexual education is addressed to positively build social skills on the individual.

This is the approach adopted by organizations like Sidastudi, which offer specific workshops in high schools. “The idea of sexuality that students have is extended, and sexuality is approached as a right, and especially, goes beyond sex”, points out Teo Juvanteny, workshop facilitator from Sidastudi. Workshops are structured in three areas: body and pleasure; feelings and emotions; decisions and possible risks. On the basis, gender perspective as a conceptual framework. From their workshops there is the intention of widening the look from students, escaping from the hegemonic idea of sexuality: penetration as the primary source of pleasure, feminine and masculine roles, and other myths surrounding, for instance, the first time.

Sexual diversity is worked in a specific way and it is highlighted that sex and reproduction do not go hand in hand.

In educational centers where the coeducational model is effective and included in the project of the center in an explicit way, sexual education is conceived with a gender perspective. An example of this is Esteve Terrades, from Cornellà de Llobregat, a center where sexual education did not have great importance until the moment when, as a result of a great number of teenage pregnancies, it was decided to dedicate a quarter subject in 2nd of O.S.E, corresponding to the alternative to religion, to teaching affectivity and sexuality. Teacher Rosa Aznar exposes that this way, lot of themes are covered and there is space for the students to share their doubts and questions. Aznar treated the themes from a comprehensive and gender perspective with the aim of looking into self-awareness. For Aznar, it is a matter of rights: “As people we have the right to decide about our own body, and if we do not know our body we cannot decide”.

V. SHORTCOMINGS AND DEFECTS OF THE CURRENT PEDAGOGICAL MODELS

The paradigm of current sexual education violates rights because one does not have universal access and has not been provided with the necessary information and competences. The **lack of obligatoriness** is the reason why affective and sexual education does not have a vertebrate role in school curriculum. This factor is vital for affectivity and sexuality to be taken seriously and for them to occupy an important place. At the same time, it would avoid conflict with the families and school community who might disagree. Therefore, it is the only way to guarantee the fulfillment of the right to be informed on one's sexual and reproductive rights.

Another effect that arises is **bad coordination** and communication from the various interventions that take place in the same center, especially those where the need is high. This bad coordination also occurs in institutions. Sexual education is principally linked to the Health Department—a fact that shapes the look and approach later adopted—and it does not do networking with other departments as Education, Young people or Social welfare, which also have competence on the subject.

Beyond institutional obstacles based on organizational cultures, various people interviewed argument that immobility towards progress is due to the fact that sexuality is still a taboo for our society, for political parties, families and teachers. The heteropatriarchy embedded in gears of the educational system is illustrated specially on the **physician-rehabilitator model**, which approaches sexuality from prevention and risk control and does not include crucial aspects to live sexuality in equality, pleasure and autonomy. We do not talk about negotiation, consent, what a relationship on equal terms or communication between partners has to look like, etc. The discourse around the myth of romantic love is still there —that the couple will last forever, that breaking up with someone is a fail, etc—. At the same time, power relations are still present in relationships and the prevailing discourses. Instead, sexual activity is centered around the genitals, without including any other forms of pleasure. Thus, there are lots of myths and beliefs around sexual activity, relationships, etc. not tackled by this pedagogical approach, and this consequently helps its perpetuation.

Regarding the punctual, sporadic and **external intervention dominant model**, it has certain shortcomings. The workshops taught by experts are, on the one hand, a solution found by the centers when they have to teach specific knowledge that teachers cannot offer and, on the other hand, an insufficient way to cover the big needs and doubts that students have about affectivity and sexuality. According to the expert Pere Font, “workshops are not a good solution but they plug the hole”. Font arguments that this educational model is born from a diagnosis problem. Instead of diagnosing an educational need on children, teachers’ shortcomings are detected when addressing the issue. Olga Juárez, from the ASPB, coincides with Font and exposes that the wrong representation of the problem leads to a treatment of it from the health perspective. Juárez arguments that in order to achieve the objectives formulated, there has to be the will and implication from an educational perspective that creates solid basis on affectivity and sexuality.

In addition, we have to consider that **there is not a list of criteria** to be followed and which has to comply with the interventions so that external

sexual education is taught with a gender perspective, based on rights, comprehensive, etc. On the other side, expert voices, as well as the WHO, point out that internal work carried out by teachers who share day to day with the children is more effective and empowering than when this is taught by an unknown person. Conversely, professionals in the centers are opposed to this principle for the simple reason that there is a lack of information and they believe that an expert person can provide a better knowledge. Coordinators of O.S.E from the high school Sant Andreu and from Turó de Roquetes, Jèssica Obispo and Marta Ribas respectively, coincide in signaling the **insufficient teacher training in the centers** where they work, and they assure that this is a general complaint from tutors, who often find themselves overwhelmed with issues that arise in the class in relation to affectivity and sexuality. Although the ASPB recommends the teachers to go to the CJAS to receive training, this would be during school time and it is not obligatory. Therefore, possibilities to receive training are reduced.

The lack of teacher training is an obstacle if we opt for transversality of sexual education. A great number of teachers consider that sexual and affective education is not their responsibility, that they do not have the right training to do it and that the subject generates a lot of insecurity on them. Consequently, although that it is an ideal model for a lot of our persons interviewed, it also has some disadvantages. Firstly, diverse opinions say that transversality leads to the dilution of the subject and a superficial treatment of it. Although there is a consensus that it is easier to implement it in primary school, the shortcomings become more visible in secondary school, where transversality becomes more complex and requires a greater effort.

Mirta Lojo explains that we are also educating in the silence and invisibilization of certain knowledges. It is the **hidden curriculum** through which subjective representations from every teacher are transmitted involuntarily. This hidden curriculum can be counterproductive if the teachers reproduce gender stereotypes and other contradictory discourses. This is, therefore, one of the biggest obstacles when we assume that everyone can adequately incorporate it in their subject without having received a feminist training.

We have to add to these shortcomings the fact that transversality is not evaluated by any indicator or evaluation plan, so we need an evaluation strategy that helps to know to what extent it is being worked and whether it is effective or not.

VI. SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

From all the collected concerns and claims, we have decided to choose three very important ones to achieve a substantial improvement in the current pedagogical model.

First of all, in order for affective and sexual education to be effective and accessible to everybody, we suggest this to become a compulsory subject during all formal education. Secondly, we recommend it to have a feminist approach based on reproductive and sexual rights, with the objective of empowering people. And finally, we suggest that commitment is made to introduce it in a concrete space of the curriculum, combined with a progressive transversality.

Obligatoriness

Obligatoriness of sexual education in the school curriculum, with contents, a linked budget and a concrete space is vital if we want to achieve objectives related to skills, capacities and knowledge established by the Department of Education. Otherwise, affective and sexual education lays in no man's land and we end up without an in-depth analysis. Thus, the only way to guarantee the right to be informed in affectivity and sexuality is to make it official and of compulsory education. This way, the guarantee of the right does not depend on high schools randomness. The obligatory nature of the subject has an impact on teachers, making them feel more free and legitimized to teach it. Then, problems with families or school community would not be an impediment. But in order to deal with dissatisfaction or complaints from families, awareness and training programs should be included both for families and educators.

Obligatoriness is already included in a lot of laws. However, we need to develop and implement it from kindergarten to high school. Thus, we demand once and for all full compliance with what is written and justified for several reasons.

Sexual education based on rights with gender perspective

Affective and sexual education must be approached as sexual education based on rights, as agreed in the **1994 Cairo Conference**, and it also has to include persons with functional diversity, as incorporates the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities²⁷. It is from this rights perspective that authorities have the responsibility of complying with this right universally, during all formative stages and providing the school environment with resources: pedagogical material and teacher training.

Regarding the adopted approach, we have to leave behind the physician-rehabilitator model and conceive sexual education from a comprehensive and gender-sensitive point of view. What we need is to implement a broad view of sexuality and affectivity that specially works affectivity, and then incorporates sexuality. Pere Font points out that it is very important that both teacher training and affective and sexual education are reflexive, promote debate, remove prejudice and raise awareness of one's own discriminatory framework instead of resorting to normative approaches. Health and prevention of risky behaviors are a fundamental part but we have to address the issue from an empowering gender perspective.

Hence, sexual and affective education must include content about the **right to pleasure**, sexual diversity, gender identity, healthy and equal relationships, etc. It is crucial that affective and sexual education goes hand in hand with the educational model of the center. Establishing some criteria to be followed around gender and rights perspective, we avoid that external

²⁷ The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo had a huge impact in promoting women's reproductive and sexual rights. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted in 2006 by the General Assembly of the United Nations to ask the states to fight for non-discrimination and positive action of persons with disabilities.

workshops or contents in textbooks do not include them, since they should meet those standards.

Concrete space in the curriculum and progressive transversality

Although there is a lively debate, in order to ensure that sexual education is taught, this subject needs to have a concrete space in the curriculum. It is a necessary decision which fits the current circumstances. Given the little teacher training, it is more feasible to train the teachers who are motivated and willing to teach it rather than imposing it, so that teachers do not do it reluctantly. **Sexual and affective education occupies a place in the curriculum of every year** and this way the indicated contents are covered. This does not mean that external training has to disappear automatically. It is a resource that can be very positive when used as a reinforcement. It cannot substitute a center's job, but function as a complement.

At the same time, we have to **raise awareness among all teachers** so that we can progressively combine sexual education taught separately with transversality. Imposing transversality from the very beginning is not considered an effective solution, at least in secondary school, since according to the Consortium this is what we have now and it does not work in secondary school. If there is no person in charge, this is not likely to happen. Honrubia points out that in primary school they already do a very transversal treatment of emotions, feelings, affects, and therefore it is highly achieved and transversality works and is possible. That said, in secondary school transversality is more difficult to implant. Thus, a concrete space in the curriculum, within a subject as "citizenship education" or the new one "ethics and values" would fit with the proposal. Little by little, as teachers are trained we can address it in a cross-cutting way and, for example, promote projects in different areas with related topics. With a health vision, Olga Juárez adds arguments so that in educational centers there be an increased incidence of health related issues —beyond reproductive and sexual health— in concrete projects. In addition, there is emphasis on the importance of influencing neighbor groups of the school community: families and street educators.

In terms of teacher training —the greatest current shortcoming— the first factor that must be addressed is the teacher’s view on this subject, the revision of one’s own prejudice, conceptions and mental frameworks. Mirta Lojo opts for advice in the center, rather than training in the strict sense of transmission of knowledge, and she argues that, even so, this training “comprises processes of maximal complexity, which are slow because they affect what is personal, and the results are never absolute or immediate”. María Honrubia, expert in teacher training, exposes that **training must be introduced in pre-school and primary education university degrees**, but also in social education, social work, pedagogy and MA in how to become a high school teacher, as well as health related degrees: psychology, medicine and nursing. Thus, awareness and training of future professionals is vital for the change to be noticed as soon as possible.

VII.

AN EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW

In the previous section we set out and propose a sexual education which meets three requirements. However, we do not enter the debate on how to include it in the curriculum, what content must be taught every year or how to train the teachers. This is a complex debate that has to involve education and health professionals, among many other areas. With the aim of designing an educational model, the fact of counting with successful examples constitutes a complementary help. For this reason, we present **the case of Denmark** and their effective way to incorporate affective and sexual education.

Sexual education in Denmark becomes an obligatory part of the educational system in 1970 and since then it has evolved and has adapted to the needs of society. Sex and Society²⁸ —formerly named Danish Family Planning Association— is the non-governmental organization that, since its creation in 1956 has fought for abortion legalization (achieved in 1973) and mandatory sexual education in Denmark, among many other sexual rights²⁹.

Originally, arguments in favor meet with the need of reducing sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies, and the goal is to shape the character of the boy/girl and the promotion of a certain behavior. Nevertheless, sexual education in Denmark has been in constant evolution and revision. The subject has been oriented towards a **much more democratic approach**. Initiated in a biological preventive model it has opted for a comprehensive perspective that encompasses many other aspects³⁰.

²⁸ Translated from Danish “Sex og Samfund”

²⁹ Sex and Society (2015)

³⁰ Roien, L. A. (2015) *The Danish Experience: Introduction to Health and Sex Education in Denmark, Teaching Methodologies*

The direct connection between reality and the subject curriculum is one of the great strengths of “the Danish model”. Teachers are conceived as a central piece and from the very beginning, their training becomes a priority.

How do they include sexual education in the curriculum?

Sex and Society explains that the Danish school system incorporates sexual education between six and sixteen years old in an obligatory subject called “**Health and sex education and family studies**”. The subject is continuously taught from primary until secondary school, and it deals with other health issues that are not directly related with sexual education, such as alcohol, drugs, healthy eating, etc. Although it has concrete objectives, concepts are taught based on the students age and interest.

The main goal transmitted is **to live health in a positive way**. That is why education is based on action competence (empowerment), centered in educating for the capacity of knowledge, compromise and critical sense, among others. The **empowerment perspective** is oriented towards an active participation of students and, therefore, teaching methods are centered in the dialogue, and the activities can go from explaining real cases to organizing role plays to generate debate. One of the activities recently promoted, provided by Sex and Society, is the Sexuality Week. During this week, from 1st grade until 4th of O.S.E, the focus is on talking and debating questions related to sexuality, adapted to every age³¹.

This pedagogical model has a broad and comprehensive vision on health and sexuality and it accompanies children’s cycle of life, in a way that **knowledge adapts to every stage**. At the same time, it successfully opts for **giving the subject a specific place**, so that it has more weight in the school curriculum than if they only opted for transversality.

³¹ Roien, L.A. (2015)

The organization Sex and Society realizes that the Danish sexual education is not perfect, but works to push and achieve continuous improvements in the system. It should be mentioned that this character of continuous improvement and revision is one of the essential aspects when incorporating sexual education in the curriculum.

AS A CONCLUSION

The aim of this study has been to analyze the state of question around affective and sexual education in the public primary and secondary school centers of Catalonia, and to give arguments and proposals for its improvement.

At present, the right to receive a comprehensive sexual education is being violated, and this infringement lies in a lack of leadership to lead firm sexual education policies. The immobility in some public institutions, which count on slow organizational cultures or which do not want to face the issue of sexual education as a matter of theirs, is the first obstacle to overcome.

If we want the presented proposals to proceed, sexual education must be linked to a major educational policy which has to manifest the importance of the subject for the development of a democratic, egalitarian, free, autonomous and empowered society. To make that possible, it is necessary for the Education Department of the Government of Catalonia to be totally involved, to make decisions in the short, medium and long term and to coordinate with other areas of the Government such as the Health Department. We need broad consensus and a great deal of political and transforming will so that affective and sexual education becomes a vertebral axis of the education of our society.

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