



The University Of Sheffield.



PRESS RELEASE

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Making sex education accessible to all Europeans.

Sexual Education for Adults with Disabilities, their parents and staff

World Contraception Day on September 26, is an important reminder that it is essential for all young people and adults – including people with learning disabilities – to make informed decisions regarding their sexual life and reproductive health.

This year's motto, "It's your life, it's your future", accurately pinpoints the core issue in providing efficient sexual education and family planning solutions – that of giving people information and options tailored to both their specific needs and life choices.

Unfortunately, not all adults are allowed to make their own decisions when it comes to their sexual life and reproductive rights, as people with learning disabilities continue to face discrimination in Europe and around the world, in terms of freedom of choice and access to information.

Article 23 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) provides that people with learning disabilities have a right to "found a family", "freely decide on the number and spacing of children" and "retain their fertility on an equal basis with others". Furthermore, Article 25 on Health, upholds that "free and informed consent" must be the basis of providing healthcare.

Sadly, a striking gap still exists between the provisions of the UN CRPD and reality. Throughout Europe thousands of people with learning disabilities are victims of sexual abuse and blatant violations of their human rights. These violations include forced sterilisation and coerced abortions. Therefore we need to urgently enforce the respect of the rights of people with learning disabilities and put an end to these violent practices. Enforcing these rights also includes providing accessible information to people with learning disabilities about sexuality and relationships, in a creative and innovative way.

Sexual Education for Adults with Disabilities, their parents and staff, or "SEAD", is a European initiative designed to tackle such issues and provide an effective and accessible manner of teaching sex education and family planning to people with learning disabilities.

The project is the result of the cooperation between nine organizations (representing people with disabilities and the education sector) from seven EU countries: Autism-Europe (Belgium), Ammattioipsto Luovi (Finland), Bergische Volkshochschule and EuConcilia (Germany), Molnár Gábor Műhely Alapítvány (Hungary), The Kaunas centre for young people with disabilities (Lithuania), Hogeschool van Arnhem en Nijmegen (the Netherlands), CHANGE and the University of Sheffield (United Kingdom).

SEAD's aim is to address the lack of accessible information and knowledge of adults with disabilities, their parents, and staff in the field of sexual education, from a creative perspective, adapted to their specific needs. It will be achieved through the development of a comprehensive toolkit combining activities like role and drama play, with pictures, audio/video materials and tools. The project partners believe that this alternative way of facilitating education through innovation and arts is an excellent way of fostering the social inclusion of people with disabilities, as well as key to supporting their personal development.

One of the teaching aids developed by SEAD is the Wordbank, a carefully compiled glossary of elementary terms for discussing sex and relationships, in easy to read format.

SEAD is an invitation to initiate dialogue on the subject of contraception, family planning and sex education, open to all European citizens, with this aim campaign days on sexual education for people with learning disabilities are planned across Europe.

**More information and interviews, please do not hesitate to contact Aurélie Baranger, Director of Autism-Europe, in Brussels. Tel: +32 (0)2 675 75 05
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The Wordbank tool on the SEAD website: <http://sead-project.eu/words-to-use/>

CAMPAIGN DAYS ACCROSS EUROPE

Country	Location	Dates of Events
Finland	Tampere	2 - 3 December 2014
	All of Finland	14 February 2014
Hungary	Kisújszállás	18 October 2014
	Ajka	14 December 2014
Lithuania	Kaunas	22 October 2014
	Kaunas	5 December 2014

www.autismeurope.org

www.sead-project.eu



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