

# Sex Ed Matters Impact Statement 2023



Photo: Sex Ed Matters speaking about the power of consent education at Women of the World (WoW) Festival in the Southbank, London in March 2023

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## Executive Summary

2023 saw the biggest expansion of Sex Ed Matters since we were established in 2019 and with this, we achieved more impact than ever before.

Throughout the year, we:

- **Reached 3,587 people** (including students, teachers and adults) through our workshops on consent, periods, friendships and sexuality
- **Expanded our team** to include our first advisory board, as well as four key mentors from Innovate UK and Citibank
- Gained over 150,000 signatures for our **new tampon tax petition**, lobbying retailers to reduce the price of period products in line with tampon tax ending and **attended government roundtables** to make these essential products more accessible
- **Raised £23,269** in funding from Innovate UK and UKRI to expand our mission, which is 10 times our fundraising in 2022
- **Secured coverage in major news outlets** including the Guardian, the Independent and ITV News, to further legitimise sex education and amplify student voices

2024 is set to be even bigger than 2023 for Sex Ed Matters, as we have secured more funding to create an AI tool empowering schools and businesses to identify and mitigate very specific safeguarding issues they're responsible for.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us in 2023! We can't wait to continue focusing on impact and innovation in 2024.

## Introduction

At Sex Ed Matters, we believe in transparency. That's why for the first time ever, we're publishing our impact statement, showcasing all the hard work we underwent in 2023 and the impact we made. We hope this will help demonstrate how much goes on behind the scenes and what our aspirations are for the future.

Below you'll find more information about the impact of our workshops, team, campaigning, funding, coverage and a look ahead to what 2024 has in store for us.

## Workshops

We reached more schools, youth organisations and businesses than ever before!

In total, throughout 2023 we reached:

- 2,210 students through our workshops on consent, periods, sexuality and friendships
- 142 teachers through our CPD-accredited teacher training programme
- 800 young people through fairs and festivals
- 125 students by hosting a debate competition on RSE topics at SHHS
- 435 adults through our sex education in the workplace scheme



## Our team

This year, we underwent the largest expansion of our team ever. We welcomed:

- Our adult advisory board, filled with 16 incredible experts in many fields, including education, activism, diversity, business and finance
- Our incredible mentors Chandila Fernando and Heather Benham from Innovate UK, the Government's business incubator, and Sarah Seiler and Farhaan Saleel from Citibank who began supporting us as part of the Yunus and Youth fellowship and have decided to continue working with us through 2024
- We have also organised our first youth advisory board, filled with amazing young people interested in many different sectors including music, medicine and activism. This group will help inform our work in 2024 to ensure we are meeting the needs of young people
- We worked with Lesley Kituka, our fantastic intern whose time was paid for by Royal Holloway University and Santander, and we look forward to working with her further next year

Thank you to everyone who supported us in 2023!

Next year, we will work with Lesley Kituka as our Community Organiser, and we will re-organise our advisory board to include working groups to maximise impact.



Our core team from left to right: Farhaan Saleel, Heather Benham, Lesley kituka, Julia Coryton, Chandila Fernando and Sarah Seiler

## Campaigning

Since 2014, we have been strong advocates for sex education to be as accessible as possible because we believe everyone should have the tools and confidence to express themselves and speak up if something is ever wrong. Empowerment is what sex education is all about.

Our campaigning legacy includes running the tampon tax petition, signed by over 300,000 people. Together, we successfully lobbied parliament into establishing the Tampon Tax Fund, through which £100m was donated to female focused charities and ended the tax in 2021.

In 2023, we underwent the following campaigning activity:

- Started a petition lobbying retailers to lower the price of period products in line with tampon tax ending - gaining over 150,000 signatures
- We were nominated for One Young World's Campaign of the Year Award
- We spoke several times with civil servants and Ministers at the Treasury about our campaign to ensure the price of period products is reduced in line with tampon tax ending so they're accessible as the essential products they are
- We spoke at the London Labour Party's first Equalities Conferences about the importance of consent education and what Labour could do to empower students
- We met with M&S and Boots to lobby them to reduce the price of period products in line with tampon tax ending and these talks are ongoing
- We attended a government roundtable to discuss how the Free Period Scheme can be improved to combat period poverty
- Helped organise a protest to lobby parliament into tackle period poverty through policy change

### Tampon tax ended. Where are the price cuts? #DropTamponTax

Started  
Petition to

November 8, 2022  
[asda](#) and [4 others](#)

**154,803**

Signatures

**200,000**

Next Goal

- We collected 400 hand-written testimonials from students across the country which showcase their experiences of period stigma and poverty. Together with many other organisations such as Irise International, Freedom4Girls and Love Your Period Wales, we delivered these postcards to Number 10 Downing Street to demonstrate the need to tackle period poverty in the UK through policy and investment
- We worked with several influencers to tackle period stigma including Life Before Plastic and musician Sophie Frear
- We delivered free period products to students across the country, donated by TOTM and Asan Cup
- We supported the NHS Confederation's work on the Women's Health Strategy to showcase the wider public savings and benefits which could be reaped from tackling period poverty
- We worked closely with charity Bloody Good Period to ensure retailers reduce the price of period products in line with tampon tax ending so they're more accessible

In 2024, we have lots of campaigning planned including joining a government roundtable dedicated to tackling period poverty and can't wait to share.



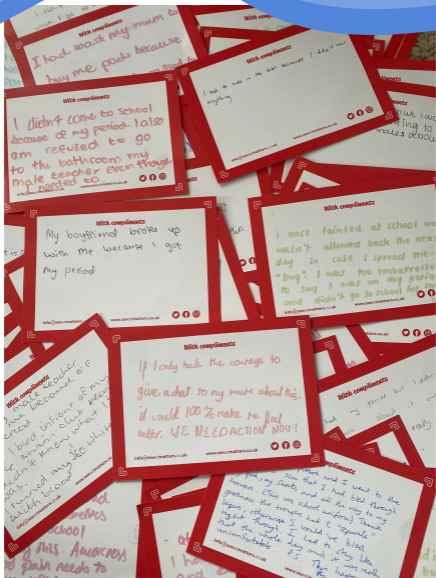


Photo: the hand-written testimonials of period poverty we collected from students across the country to demonstrate the scale of the problem



## Funding

We are committed to transparency regarding funding. In 2023, we won the following grants:

Award	Body	Purpose/Impact	Amount
Young Innovator Award	Innovate UK	Boost access to sex education beyond schooling	£13,619 plus mentorship
Knowledge Exchange Programme	UKRI/Oxford Brookes University	Turn academic research into anti-sexism course for girls in state schools through which we're supporting 35 schools	£9,650 (£7,000 to be paid in 2024)
Young Social Entrepreneurship Fellowship	Yunus and Youth	Long-term mentorship, business training and support of fellows	£0 - mentorship only
Design For Growth	Innovate UK	Design consultations to ensure we're delivering empowering sex education through the power of design	£0 - 12 hours of consultation only
		<b>Total</b>	<b>£23,269</b>

We also applied for five funds unsuccessfully, but which we may apply for again in 2024 as we evolve, including the Big Education Challenge (for which we were a finalist but not a winner), Movement For Good Fund, DBACE, Santander X Awards (for which we were a finalist but not a winner) and Royal Society of Arts competition.

## Coverage

Media coverage is important to us because we want to shine a light on topics which are often sidelined and stigmatised, including periods, and amplify voices which are routinely silenced, such as targets of harassment.

To achieve this, throughout 2023, we secured coverage discussing periods, consent, friendships and sexuality in the Guardian, ITV News, Radio 5 Live, LBC News, Times Radio, BBC Jersey, Voice Magazine, Leaders Magazine, BBC Radio Oxford, Education Journal, Talk TV, SecEd, TeachWire, Kiss FM, Wales Online, Heart Radio, In Your Area, Coventry Live, Bristol Live, Derbyshire Telegraph, Scooper News, Grimsby Live, InterCardiff, and Personal Care Insights.



### RSE lessons – Let's stop the scaremongering



Concerns over lesson content are prompting calls for a review of the RSE curriculum – but such worries are at odds with reality, says Laura Coryton



## Partnerships

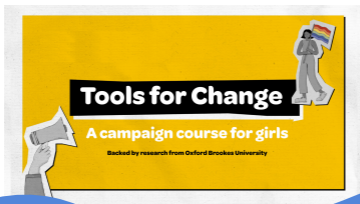
In 2023, we had the great privilege of working with academics Dr Michele Paule and Dr Hannah Yelin from Oxford Brookes University thanks to the institution's Knowledge Exchange programme! This funded project helped us turn their years of academic research of girls' confidence into a anti-sexism campaigning course to empower girls in state schools across the country.

As part of this, we have:

- Created five resources to guide students through the process of planning, launching and sustaining a campaign which tackles any barrier they face
- Launched five activities to help build the confidence of students
- Worked with charity Ambitious About Autism to ensure our work is accessible and meets the needs of a variety of young people
- Enrolled 37 schools and youth programmes onto our programme from across the country
- Created a dedicated section of our website for this project
- Scripted an informative video to help raise awareness of our campaign
- Secured a slot on BBC Oxford Radio to discuss the importance of the scheme and what it could bring

We hope this programme can support the changemakers of tomorrow and inspire more girls to become the leaders our country needs.

We will continue to work on this project throughout 2024. You can find out more by heading to [www.sexedmatters.co.uk/tools-for-change](http://www.sexedmatters.co.uk/tools-for-change).



### **Looking ahead to 2024**

We are absolutely thrilled to have won Innovate UK's Unlocking Potential Award which will help us create an AI-enhanced tool for schools and businesses to identify and mitigate safeguarding risks throughout 2024. We're also focusing on supporting more vulnerable people, such as inmates, and parents to ensure quality sex education is as accessible as possible.

Thank you for reading our impact statement for 2023 and for supporting us through the biggest year we've ever had, filled with many highs and lows. We couldn't do it without you. We can't wait to grow even more in 2024 and to continue championing sex education with you.



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