

Bundeszentrale Für Gesundheitliche Aufklärung (Bzga) [Federal Centre for Health Education] Tasks and Objectives

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Abstract

The Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung (BZgA) or Federal Center for Health Education (FCHE) is an agency of the German government. The BzGA prepares health education and promotion materials for dissemination in the mass media, including the Internet; tests concepts and tailored health messages; and conducts scientific studies and investigations. The BzGA has a primary responsibility for carrying out campaigns that address tobacco, alcohol, and drug use issues, as well as family planning, sex education and AIDS prevention.

Foreward

The Federal Centre for Health Education (FCHE) has been working for the health of the public since 1967. During this time, the scope of health education has expanded, the methods have changed, and new tasks have been added. At the same time, the demands on successful health promotion have risen. Taking these changes into consideration, we have reoriented the Centre on the basis of the remit given us at the time of our establishment in 1967. In this spirit, we shall devote even more attention in the future to elaborating scientific bases and quality assurance methods. Through national and international cooperation, we are increasingly promoting an approach based on the division of labour, as the consistent exploitation of the strengths of many partners is the only way to generate synergistic effects. In the medium term, we are aiming for the status of a clearinghouse, so that activities and resources can be concentrated on central health problems, and the effectiveness and efficiency of health education strengthened.

Our education programmes are focused on selected sections of the population. In the near future, this will mainly mean the target group of "children and young people". We see our competence as laying in the development, implementation and scientific examination of education strategies relating to the health of children and young people. This also requires the participation of central cooperation partners. At the same time, we want to give the public more information than in the past on current health-related topics of national importance. The long-term implementation of other tasks defined by our statutory commission and national policy will also continue to be of great importance, including programmes on AIDS and drug-prevention, as well as in sex education and family planning.

This description gives you an outline of how we intend to reorient our tasks. For us, they are both a prospect and a challenge as regards future developments in the field of health education.

Health Education in Germany

Health education is in the interests of public health policy. In Germany, it is performed as an ongoing, interdisciplinary responsibility at all levels, integrating all those involved. At the federal level, this task is undertaken by the Federal Centre for Health Education as a specialist authority in the sphere of responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Health. Under the establishment order of 20 July 1967, our tasks are as follows:

- the elaboration of principles and guidelines for the contents and methods of practical health education;
- the training and further education of persons active in health education;
- the coordination and strengthening of health education in the Federal Republic of Germany;
- cooperation with agencies abroad.

Preventive health care and the preservation of health are the two prime objectives of our work. In this context, the focus is on promoting the willingness of individuals to adopt responsible, health-oriented lifestyles and make proper use of the health system. Health education in this sense is carried out at several levels. Our aim is:

- to achieve a high level of public knowledge on fundamental and topical health-related subjects;
- to achieve a responsible attitude towards matters of health;
- to exert a positive influence on individual health-related behaviour and action.

The attainment of these goals demands ongoing long-term programmes handled with professional expertise on the basis of scientific knowledge. With an eye to effectiveness and efficiency, the fields of market observation, quality management and strategy development will be of particular importance in the future. Moreover, clear priorities must be set, and the target groups and subject areas precisely defined. The objective is to gain the greatest possible health benefit from the resources used.

Table 1. Tasks of the Federal Centre for Health Education

Information and communication tasks	Quality assurance tasks
Education function	Clearing and coordination function
Education in health fields with particular priority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organ donation campaign • Blood/plasma donation campaign • Current topics of health policy 	Scientific basis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies • Expert reports • Market analysis
Education in a medium-term field with specific topics and target groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health of children and young people 	Improved qualifications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced and continuing training of multipliers and co-operation partners
Long-term, nationwide education campaigns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIDS prevention • Drug prevention • Sex education 	Quality assurance methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Models • Guidelines and minimum requirements
	Innovation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of new strategies and methods
	Cooperation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-operation between central partners at national and international level for reaching a consensus and for the division of labour

Information and Communication Tasks of the BzGA [FCHE]

Experience has shown that it is important in health education to be able to react promptly to health-related topics or national importance. We must be in a position to carry out education work at short notice. At the moment, we are fulfilling this task in a motivation campaign on organ donation and a campaign on the subject of blood and plasma donation.

A new transplant act came into force on 1 December 1997. This makes it necessary to educate the public on transplant surgery and the need to carry organ donor cards. In relation to the demand, there is far too little declared willingness in Germany to donate organs. The main aims of a nationwide motivation campaign will be to:

- activate existing willingness to donate organs;
- increase the actual number of organ donations;
- make it easier for individuals to form an opinion and reach a decision;
- establish a positive atmosphere of trust in the organ donation system in Germany.

The nationwide campaign will last several years and will be implemented by the FCHE in co-operation with specialist associations, such as the Arbeitskreis Organspende and the Deutsche Stiftung für Organtransplantation (Organ Donation Working Group and the German Organ Transplant Foundation), the health insurance boards, and the associations representing doctors and pharmacists, on the basis of a division of responsibilities.

Some two million people in Germany voluntarily donate blood every year. Despite this great readiness

to donate, shortages keep occurring, especially during the summer months. There is a great donation deficit for blood plasma, used to important medicaments, such as coagulants for the haemophiliacs (bleeders). Currently about a quarter of the requirements for this have to be imported to ensure adequate supplies. Hence, Germany and the other member states of the EU are striving to become self-sufficient in blood plasma as well. For this reason we and all others involved in the blood and plasma donation system – the German Red Cross, the national and municipal blood donation services, the industry producing plasma derivatives and some commercially operation donation facilities – have design a joint campaign with the following aims.

- Strengthening the readiness in the population to donate blood and plasma.
- Informing the public in Germany about the as yet widely unknown possibility of donating plasma and motivating new donors
- Information on central aspects, such as safety.
- Increasing cooperation between all those involved in the blood and plasma donation system.

Other campaign partners include the German Society for Haemophilia, as an association of affected persons, and the German Medical Association.

In the future, we will concentrate our services and programmes on selected, top-priority areas of health education and on particularly important target groups. This will permit continuing, systematic education work in the key fields. The key fields will be defined for a limited period, which as a rule should not exceed three to five years.

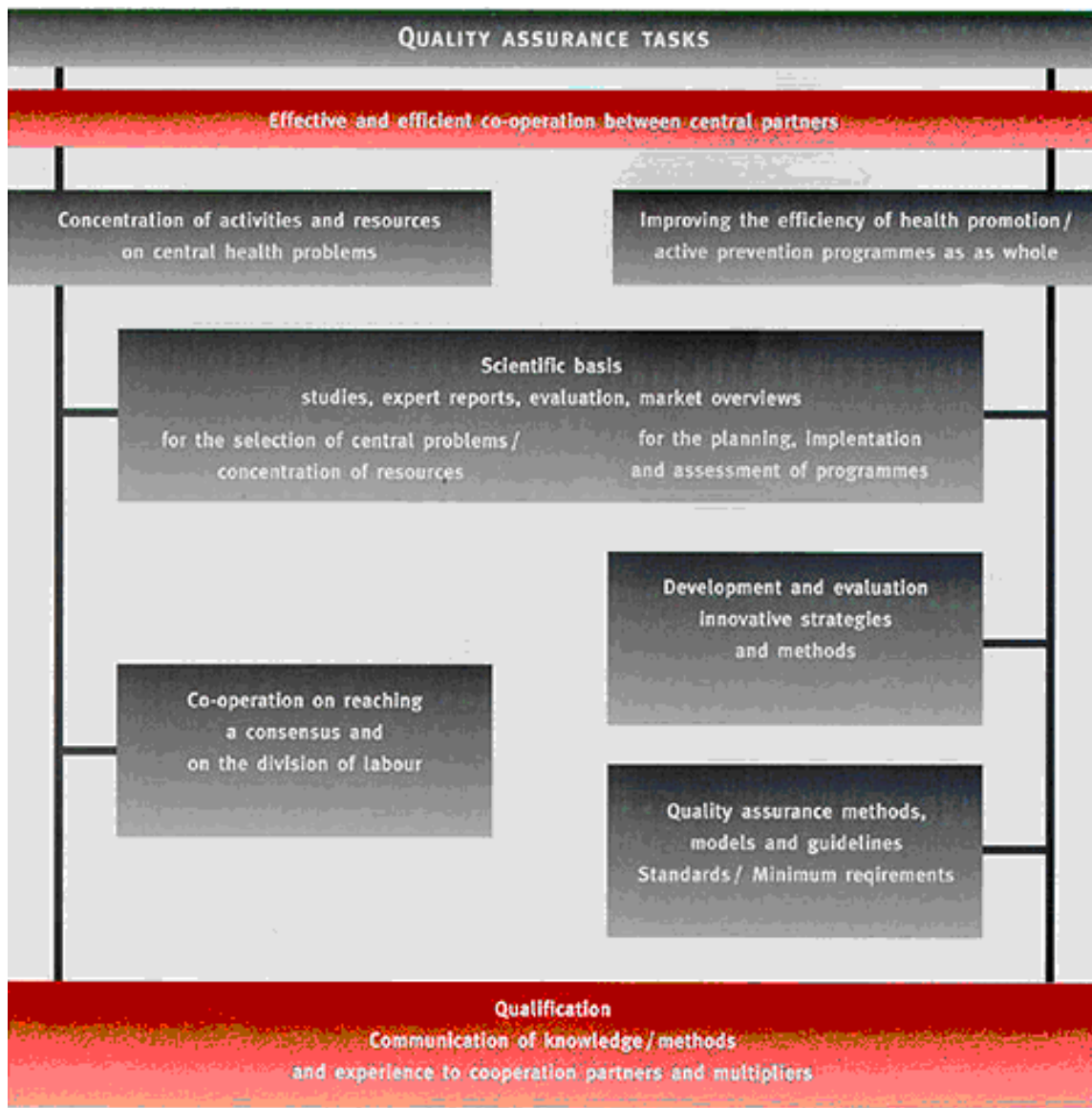


Figure 1. Quality Assurance Tasks

In the next few years, we will start by concentrating on children and young people as the target groups, as they can be expected to display long-term effects lasting into adulthood.

- Children and young people can be assumed still to have great health potential, and this should be preserved.
- The specific development tasks with which children and young people have to cope also make their mark on health-related behaviour in adulthood.
- There are clear routes of organizational access (kindergarten, schools, vocational training).

- The target groups can be reached via specific leisure-time areas (e.g. sports, disco).

Our education programmes are intended to strengthen the health skill of the children and young people. We want to provide them with help remaining healthy while coping with the various stages of development from childhood and adolescence into adulthood.

Cooperation with the children’s reference persons is an obvious move in this process of development and learning.

Depending on the development stage, not only the parents and family should be addressed in this context;

kindergarten staff, teachers, doctors, and supervisors in the leisure facilities are equally important cooperation partners.

We hope to achieve synergistic effects by combining the target-group-specific programmes for children and young people in the fields of drug prevention and sex education as well as in AIDS prevention.

Long-Term National Education Campaigns

We implement long-term campaigns in areas which require harmonized, nationwide action, particularly on the basis of national political programmes aimed at averting dangers and in accordance with our statutory responsibilities. We initiate nationwide education campaigns on the one hand, while supporting and supplementing the activities of other providers of health education.

- We have been implementing the nationwide AIDS education campaign since 1985, and since 1987, in the context of the immediate-aid programme against AIDS.
- Drug prevention on the basis of the “National Programme on Drug Abuse Control” has been a focal point of our work since 1990.
- Following the passage of the Act on Assistance for Pregnant Women and Families, we have been entrusted with the key topic of sex education since 1992.
- With the FCHE Telephone Counseling on HIV, AIDS and drug prevention we daily provide personal counseling. We either put callers in touch with local assistance and counseling services or give them the addresses of counseling services in their area. We also send them brochures on AIDS, sex education and drug prevention.

Quality Assurance Tasks of the Bzga

At the moment, the scientific basis for achieving or assessing quality in health-promotion programmes is inadequate. The effects of individual services have a number of causes, some of them external. This is one reason why there are substantial methodological problems which have yet to be tackled and solved. So far, consensus among experts on the requirements of effective and efficient health promotion has only been achieved in outline at most. Consequently, there is great need for action in this area.

In view of the confusing mass of health promotion services, projects, media and programmes available from various providers in the field of health promotion, there is an urgent need for nationwide overviews of the complex and heterogeneous field of health education. The aim is to obtain overviews at a national level which provide answers to the following questions, among others:

- Who deals with which topics and addresses which target groups, i.e. which providers / institutions /

organizations are active in health promotion on an ongoing basis?

- Who permanently produces media and provides programmes which can be made available nationwide?
- Which media and programmes are available for which target groups?
- Have the media and programmes been evaluated?

Quality Assurance

As a neutral institution not influenced by market interests, the FCHE can contribute towards establishing and maintaining a high standard of quality in the market for health promotion and prevention services. The criteria for all quality assurance measures are, on the one hand, a major benefit in terms of health and, on the other, reasonable. Our individual contributions towards achieving and maintaining quality are:

- The development of guidelines, quality criteria and quality assurance models for the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of preventive activities;
- The recommendation of minimum requirements for sub-areas of prevention;
- The evaluation of certain approaches relating to teaching methods;
- The qualification of multipliers.

Qualification

High-quality health promotion can only be guaranteed on a lasting basis by communicating experience to our partners and to multipliers. The aim is to provide need-based prevention services on the one hand, and the proper utilization of available services on the other. This requires the compilation of empirical values in the form of working aids and recommendations, as well as the development of curricula for use in basic and advanced training and in non-vocational further education.

Health promotion needs new and additional access channels and implementation routes. We shall develop and test appropriate strategies, paying particular attention to the new media. More effective and efficient problem-solving approaches for specific problem situations are to be made available in this way.

By holding consensus conferences, it is our intention to ensure the transfer of results, insights, experiences and recommendations relating to quality assurance to our partners and to multipliers, thus providing important stimuli for greater effectiveness and efficiency in the field of health promotion and education.

We fulfill the cooperation function by performing both supporting and coordinating activities. The purpose of these cooperation efforts is:

- to bundle activities;
- to ensure the professional basis of the education programmes;

- to reach a consensus on questions of content;
- to improve the coverage of recognized demand situations (nationwide).

There are special cooperative ties with the federal states as a result of the federal structure of the German state. The federal states are central partners in education campaigns of nationwide importance. Cooperation with partners within the health care system (e.g. doctors, pharmacists, health insurance funds) and beyond (e.g. the education system, as well as the work and leisure sectors) is the basis for the actual implementation and propagation of health promoting programmes.

At the international level, we are primarily active in the action programmes and the networks of the European Union. We participate in the activities relating to health promotion – including quality assurance – and in the programmes for combating AIDS and drug-abuse. We thus exploit the possibilities offered by international co-operation in order to improve health education and promotion in Germany. Another important partner is the World Health Organization (WHO), for which we act as a collaborating Centre.

Table 2. Standing Coordination Committees

The tasks of the Standing Coordination Committee are as follows:

- Exchange of information and experience in relation to projects concerning health education and health promotion
- Initiation of joint projects and agreement on the division of labour in the education field
- Development of joint recommendations

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD

The Scientific Advisory Board advises and supports the FCHE

- In the collection, reception and utilization of new scientific findings
 - In the development of strategies and concepts
 - In ensuring effectiveness and efficiency through the development of quality assurance methods and quality criteria, as well as through achieving a consensus on standards for media and programmes.
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Bodies of the Bzga [FCHE]

The Federal Centre for Health Education is a central institution of the Federal Government. We fulfill our task in close cooperation with the other providers in the structured, federal health system. Constant adaptation to developments in science and society is of particular importance in this context. We have set up two bodies for this purpose: the Standing Coordination Committee and the Scientific Advisory Board.

Consulting and coordination between the FCHE and other providers in relation to specific work and projects are handled by a Standing Coordination Committee. In addition to the Federal Ministry of Health, its members are the partners with which the FCHE cooperates, particularly the federal states, the health insurance funds, the German Medical Association (Bundesärztekammer), the Federation of German Pharmacists' Associations

(Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutscher Apothekerkammern), the Robert Koch-Institute (Robert Koch-Institut), and the Federal Association for Health (Bundesvereinigung für gesundheit).

The Scientific Advisory Panel is there to assist us in carrying out our work of improving the state of health of the general population and of specific target groups. In particular, it is intended to contribute towards ensuring the scientific basis and quality of our programmes in the fields of prevention, health education and health promotion. It is also there to advise us on matters of fundamental importance, especially in connection with the planning, implementation and evaluation of our prevention tasks.

The Scientific Advisory Board comprises nine experts from the fields of epidemiology, psychology, empirical research, youth research, economics and communication research, as well as representatives of

the public-health associations and one representative each from the federal Ministry of Health and the Working Committee of Supreme Health Authorities of the federal states.

By performing the above-mentioned tasks, we will develop into a clearinghouse for efficient and effective cooperation between central providers. This clearinghouse is intended to help concentrate activities and resources on central health problems and to improve the efficiency of prevention and health promotion as a whole.

Mass Media

The FCHE can supply a number of brochures, teaching materials, films, posters, exhibitions and folders for various target groups. As a rule, no charge is made.

Alongside the general public, the most important target groups are parents of children and young people, teachers, kindergarten staff and health-care workers. Media overviews are available in German on the main FCHE themes as follows:



Brochure
[Addiction Prevention](#)
Order No.:33110100



Brochure
[AIDS Prevention](#)
Order No.: 70950000



Brochure
[Sex Education](#)
Order No.: 13010000



Brochure
[Health for Children and Adolescents](#)
Order No.: 95006000



Brochure
[FCHE Films](#)
Bestell-Nr.:99000000



Brochure
[FCHE Exhibitions](#)
Order No.:95001000

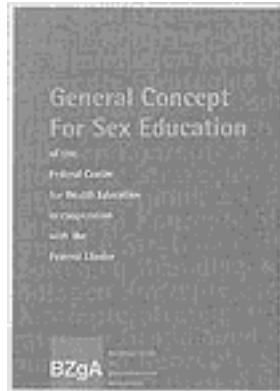
Figure 2. Examples of Mass Media

Concepts

Target-group-specific and theme-related concepts are available in different languages. They describe the respective existing conditions, aims, target-groups and implementation strategy.



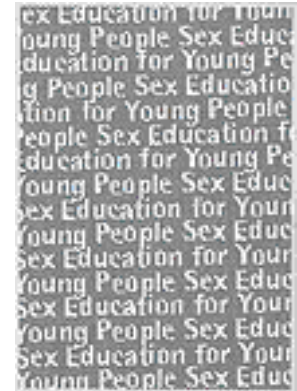
Brochure
[Health for Children and Adolescents](#)
 Order No.:60401070



Brochure
[General Concept for Sex Education](#)
 Order No.: 13002100



Brochure
[Concept-Cadre portant sur l'Education Sexuelle](#)
 Order No.:13002200



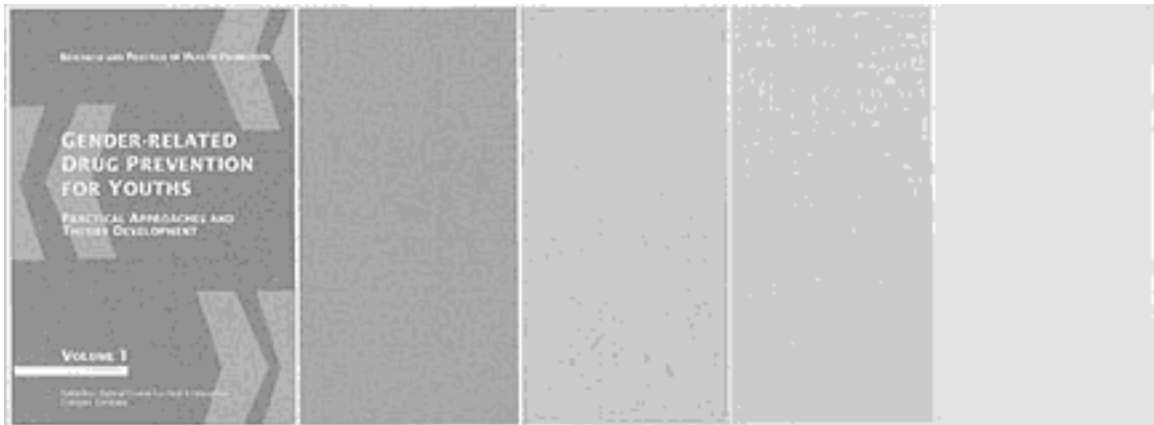
Brochure
[Concept: Sex Education for Young People](#)
 Order No.: 12006070

Figure 3. Target Group Specific and Theme-Related Concepts

Studies and Scientific Investigations

The specialist booklet series “Research and Practice in Health Education” and “Research and Practice in Sex Education and Family Planning” present the main results of studies and pilot projects as well as the reports of seminars and congresses.

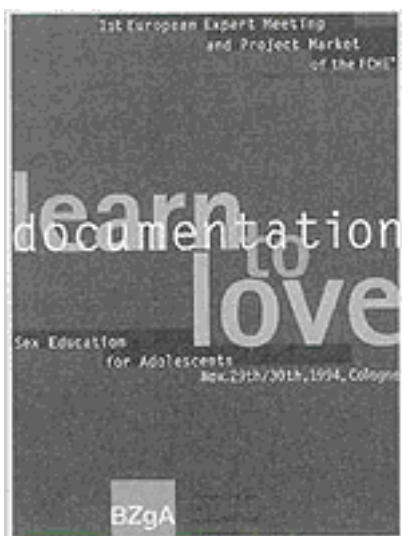
Through the specialist booklet series, the FCHE provides a forum for discussion and networking between the academic community and workers in the field. English-language versions of the following have been published to date, or are in the course of preparation:



Volume 1 (Order No.:60802070)
[Gender-related Drug Prevention for Youths](#)
Practical Approaches and Theory Development

Volume 2 (Order No.:60801070)
[Ecstasy: Use and Prevention Empirical Research Results and Guidelines](#)
Documentation of a FCHE status seminar

Volume 3 (Order No.:60803070)
[Quality Assurance in AIDS Prevention](#)
Report of the Expert conference from 13 to 15 November, 1995 in Cologne



Brochure
[Report of the first FCHE European Specialist Conference and Project Fair "Learn to love – Sex Education for Young People"](#)
Conference presentations on the subjects of media, the family, peer involvement approaches, work with girls, work with boys.
Order No.:13301070



Brochure
[First Specialist Conference on Sex Education Work with Boys, Bad Honnef, 27 to 29 February 1996](#)
Order No.:1330370



Figure 3. Pamphlets for the Professional

Campaigns

The volumes in the series “Research and Practice in Sex Education and Family Planning” are only available in German. However, the major findings of

the scientific research are available in an English-language summary, and there is an English-language overview of the various research and pilot projects in sex education and family planning.



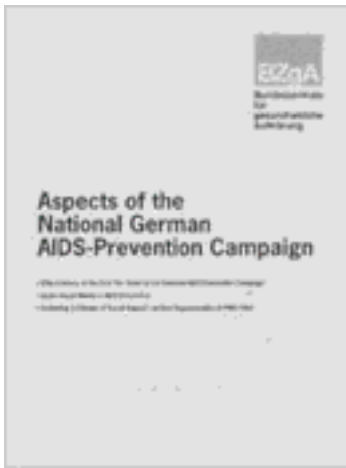
Sexuality and contraception from the point of view of young people and their parents. Final results of a representative repeat survey. Order No.:13311070



Sex Education and Family Planning. Research and Pilot Projects, sponsored by and in co-operation with the FCHE – Abstracts – Order No.:1330270



Contraception and Sexual Behaviour among Adolescents and Young Adults. A repeat Survey on behalf of the FCHE from 1996 Order No.:13312070



Brochure
Aspects of the National German AIDS-Prevention Campaign

This brochure can be obtained by writing to dept. 1-12 at the FCHE

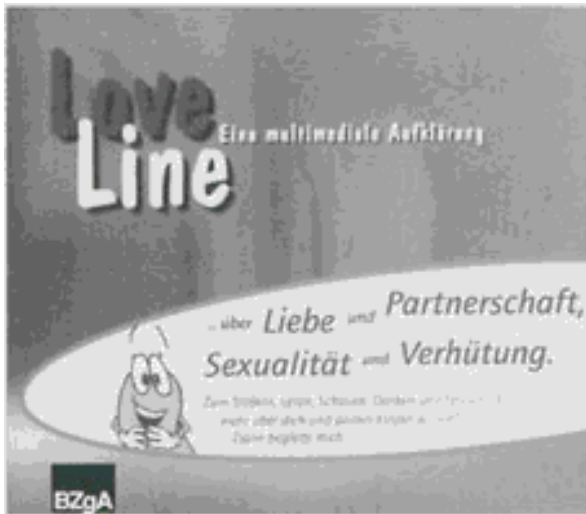


Brochure
The Fight Against AIDS in the Federal Republic of Germany
Order No.:70290072



Materials Collection
Press folder on addiction
Order No.:33520070

Figure 4. Sexuality Related Pamphlets



CD-ROM
Love Line – Multimedia education on love and partnership, sexuality and contraception

A CD-ROM to browse through, read, look at, think about and play with for young people aged 14 and over. The CD-ROM offers information on important topics of sex education in the form of written and spoken texts, films, music and cartoons. It deals with the subject of interpersonal relationships and provides answers to the most common questions asked by young people.

The original German version of the CD-ROM can be loaned from all photo offices of the Lander, districts and municipalities, the film agencies of the Lander, the Catholic and Evangelical Media Centres and the German Film Centre. For DM 20,-it is also available under Order No.13350000.

A short English version of “Love Line” can be found under [HTTP://bzga.ed/sexualaufklaerung](http://bzga.ed/sexualaufklaerung).

Bzga [FCHE] ON THE INTERNET

Figure 5. Love Line CD-ROM



Figure 6. WWW Page <http://bzga.de>

Under <http://bzga.de> you can find information about our education campaigns, scientific investigations and current work. From 1999 we shall also be able to provide information about our international work. Various brochures, along with “Love Line” – our multimedia information for young people are already available in English.

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