

The journey towards comprehensive sexuality education

Global status report



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S H O R T S U M M A R Y

How are countries advancing towards comprehensive sexuality education for all?

Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) is central to children and young people's well-being, equipping them with the knowledge and skills they need to make healthy and responsible choices in their lives.

This report draws on multiple data sources to provide analysis of countries' progress towards delivering good quality school-based CSE to all learners. 85 per cent of 155 countries surveyed have policies or laws relating to sexuality education, with considerably more countries reporting policies to mandate delivery at secondary education level than at primary level. However, the existence of policy and legal frameworks do not always equate to comprehensive content or strong implementation.

Most countries report that they have some curricula in place but more detailed analysis suggests that it often lacks the breadth of topics needed to make sexuality education effective and relevant. Moreover, while efforts to scale-up teacher training are evident in a range of settings, research with teachers shows that many feel they lack confidence to deliver sexuality education. Surveys show that students frequently feel that they received information too late and would have preferred sexuality education to have started earlier in their schooling.

There is evidence of opposition to CSE across a range of settings, often reflecting misinformation about the content, purpose or impact of such education. However, in many countries involvement of communities, including parents, school officials, religious leaders, media and young people themselves, has created a favourable environment for CSE.

Recommendations to countries in this report include:

- Clear mandates and budgets to ensure implementation of policies and programmes that support the availability of good quality comprehensive sexuality education for all learners.
- Invest in quality curriculum reform and teacher training.
- Strengthen monitoring of the implementation of CSE.

In a recent survey
of young people (aged 15-24)
from Asia and the Pacific,

fewer than 1 in 3
believed that their school
taught them sexuality
education well.



unesco

"Since wars begin in the minds of men and women it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed"

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Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Acknowledgements | 4 |
| Lists of acronyms | 5 |
| Executive summary | 6 |
| | |
| 1. Introduction | 11 |
| 1.1 Data sources and methodology | 15 |
| | |
| 2. Status of comprehensive sexuality education..... | 17 |
| 2.1 Laws & policies | 17 |
| 2.2 Coverage..... | 23 |
| 2.3 Curricula: Breadth and relevance of content..... | 24 |
| 2.4 Delivery | 33 |
| 2.5 Enabling environment..... | 41 |
| 2.6 Reaching vulnerable groups and out-of-school children and young people | 47 |
| 2.7 Sexuality education in the context of COVID-19 | 49 |
| | |
| 3. Conclusions and ways forward..... | 50 |
| | |
| Annexes | 53 |
| Annex 1: List of key informants..... | 53 |
| Annex 2: Information about existing measurement tools and global indicators used in the report..... | 53 |
| Annex 3: Table of data on adolescent health and provision of sexuality education in select countries..... | 54 |
| | |
| References | 55 |

Tables

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 1. Major data sets used in this report | 16 |
| Table 2. Key concepts and characteristics of CSE | 28 |

Figures

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 1. Laws and/or policies relating to sexuality education | 19 |
| Figure 2. National sexuality education programme coverage rates | 24 |
| Figure 3. Curricula related to sexuality education in the education system | 25 |
| Figure 4. Sexuality education delivery mode (primary schools) | 27 |
| Figure 5. Sexuality education delivery mode (secondary schools) | 27 |
| Figure 6. Comprehensiveness of sexuality education curriculum, as reported by survey respondents | 29 |
| Figure 7. Reported extent of inclusion within curricula of a range of key CSE topics (Secondary education) | 29 |
| Figure 8. Reported extent of inclusion within curricula of a range of key CSE topics (Primary education) | 29 |
| Figure 9. SERAT weighted scores for overall curriculum content for different age groups | 31 |
| Figure 10. SERAT weighted scores for key themes | 31 |
| Figure 11. SERAT weighted scores for learning domain | 31 |
| Figure 12. Sexuality education teaching method, as reported by survey respondents | 39 |
| Figure 13. Access to sexual and reproductive services, as reported by survey respondents | 43 |

Case studies

| | |
|---|----|
| Case study 1: A journey towards comprehensive sexuality education in Lao People's Democratic Republic | 15 |
| Case study 2: England introduces statutory Relationships & Sex Education from 2021 | 21 |
| Case study 3: A journey towards CSE in Tunisia | 21 |
| Case study 4: Commitment to, and scale up of, CSE in Jharkhand State, India | 22 |
| Case study 5: A journey towards CSE in Jamaica | 23 |
| Case study 6: Body-emotion education for pre-primary school children in Finland | 26 |
| Case study 7: Sexuality education within Scotland's Health & Well-being curriculum | 30 |
| Case study 8: A gender-transformative approach to sexuality education in Sweden | 32 |
| Case study 9: Teacher training colleges as centres for excellence in CSE teacher training | 34 |
| Case study 10: Dedicated life skills education teachers to achieve coverage in Namibia | 35 |
| Case study 11: Scaling up teacher training in Kyrgyzstan | 35 |
| Case study 12: Scripted lesson plans supporting teachers in South Africa | 36 |
| Case study 13: Cameroon's journey towards Holistic Sexuality Education | 37 |
| Case study 14: Ensuring teachers have the right support to deliver sexuality education in Chile | 37 |
| Case study 15: Armenia's journey towards an integrated model of sexuality education | 38 |
| Case study 16: A comprehensive tool for reviewing school-based sexuality education | 41 |
| Case study 17: Strong ministerial commitment to scale up CSE in Eastern & Southern Africa | 43 |
| Case study 18: Building community support for sexuality education in Pakistan | 44 |
| Case study 19: CSOs providing strong support to sexuality education in Mexico | 45 |
| Case study 20: Global Fund support to advance CSE within HIV response in sub-Saharan Africa | 46 |
| Case study 21: Perspectives on CSE from young people in the Asia Pacific region | 46 |
| Case study 22: Using digital platforms to strengthen school-based sexuality education | 47 |
| Case study 23: Reaching young people with disabilities in Uruguay | 48 |
| Case study 24: Sexuality education via Zoom during school closures in Estonia | 49 |

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List of Acronyms

| | | | |
|----------------|---|----------------|---|
| AIDS | Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome | LAC | Latin America and the Caribbean |
| ASFE | Annual Survey of Formal Education | LGBTI | Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex |
| ASRH | Adolescent sexual and reproductive health | LMIC | Low-to-middle-income country |
| BZgA | German Federal Centre for Health Education | MENA | Middle East and North Africa |
| CRPD | UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities | META | Movimiento Estamos Tod@s en Acción (We're All in Action), Young Latin American Activists for Inclusive Development) |
| CSO | civil society organization | M&E | Monitoring and evaluation |
| CARICOM | Caribbean Community | NHS | National Health Service (UK) |
| CSE | Comprehensive sexuality education | NCPI | National Commitments and Policy Instrument |
| ECA | Europe and Central Asia | NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| DBE | Department of Basic Education (South Africa) | OFSTED | Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (UK) |
| DREAMS | Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe | PEPFAR | The President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief |
| EMIS | Education Management Information Systems | RSHP | Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood |
| ESA | Eastern and Southern Africa | SADC | Southern African Development Community |
| ESHA | Estonian Sexual Health Association | SDG | Sustainable Development Goal |
| GBV | Gender-based violence | SEL | Social and Emotional Learning |
| FBO | faith-based organization | SERAT | Sexuality Education Review and Assessment Tool |
| FLE | Family Life Education | SRE | Sex and Relationships Education |
| FP | Family Planning | SRH | Sexual and reproductive health |
| GFATM | Global Fund to end AIDS, TB and Malaria | SRHR | Sexual and reproductive health and rights |
| HFLE | Health and Family Life Education | SSA | sub-Saharan Africa |
| HIV | Human Immunodeficiency Virus | STI | Sexually transmitted infection |
| HWB | Health and well-being | TCG | Technical Cooperation Group |
| IATT | Inter-Agency Task Force | UBRAF | Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UNAIDS) |
| ICPD | International Conference on Population and Development | UN | United Nations |
| ICT | Information and communication technology | UNAIDS | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS |

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